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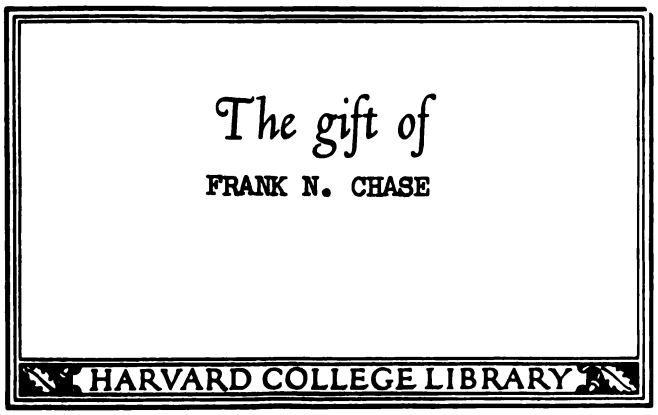

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GOLDING'S
A TRAGEDIE OF ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE

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A TRAGEDIE OF ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE

WRITTEN IN FRENCH BY THEODORE BEZA AND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY ARTHUR GOLDING

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE ABRAHAM SACRIFIANT OF THEODORE BEZA, BY MALCOLM W. WALLACE, PH.D., LECTURER IN ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO

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PREFACE

A Tragedie of Abrahams Sacrifice is a translation by Arthur Golding of the *Abraham Sacrifiant* of Théodore de Bèze, the eminent French theologian and reformer. The translation, which was finished in 1575, was published at London by Thomas Vantroullier in 1577, and has never been reprinted. The volume has become exceedingly rare; a copy is in the Bodleian Library, but I have not been able to learn of the existence of any other. The Bodleian copy, which was once in the possession of Malone, contains a manuscript note signed by him to the effect that it was bought at the sale of Mr. Forster's books in November, 1806, for £10 4s. od. The *Biographia Dramatica* says: "This piece, which is rarely met with, sold for 20 guineas at a sale in King's auction room, a few years ago." Lowndes also notes, "Forster 1166, 10£. 5s. King and Lochée's, in 181–, 21£." Collier refers to a manuscript copy of the play which is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire (*Annals*, II, p. 250).

In the present edition I have attempted to reproduce as accurately as possible the copy which is in the Bodleian (black letter, 18mo.) except in one particular, viz. the abbreviated words are written in full. The capitalization, punctuation, paging and line arrangement, both in the introductory matter and in the play proper, have been preserved. The original title-page in fac-simile faces the title-page of this edition, and the pages on which illustrations appear have been reproduced to face the corresponding pages of the reprint.

These illustrations would seem to be original with Golding's edition, although the workmanship is decidedly superior to that found in contemporary English wood-cuts. A copy of the 1552 edition of Beza's play in the Bibliothèque Mazarin, and a copy of the 1553 edition in the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal contain no illustrations, and the detailed descriptions of Beza's other editions given by Rothschild make no reference to illustrations before 1669 (v. *Le Mistére du Viel Testament*, II, pp. xlix-lxiii) Moreover it is hardly possible that Golding reproduced the wood-cuts of any of the earlier French versions.

A, B, C and D contain no illustrations of the Abraham and Isaac story; F, the version followed most closely by Beza, contains one crude wood-cut which is reproduced by Rothschild, and which he rightly describes as " un bois grossier" (vol. I, p. xxix); it bears no similarity to any of Golding's illustrations. Of the four wood-cuts in E, which, like F, was published in 1539, the only one which might possibly bear any resemblance to those of Golding's edition is that found on the title-page, and which is described as " un petit bois, qui représente Abraham levant son glaive sur la tête d'Isaac." Two wood-cuts reproduced in the 1833 edition published at Florence of Feo Belcari's *Rappresentazione e Festa d'Abraam e d'Isaac suo Figliuolo* bear no resemblance to those of Golding's. The presence of the devil in two of the four illustrations of Golding's edition is practically conclusive evidence that they were made either for Beza's play or for Golding's translation, and since none of the sixteenth century editions of the former are illustrated we may conclude that the wood-cuts were made for the latter. It is still just possible, of course, that they are not English workmanship.

I have not thought it desirable in the Introduction to say anything of Beza's life or work, for the subject has been already treated by many writers. The first of these was Hieronymus Bolsec, who in 1582 made a bitter attack on Beza in his *Historia de vita, moribus, doctrina, et rebus gestis Theod. Beza*, etc.—" faict pour aduertir & diuertir les Catholiques de ne se laisser abuser par.....doctrines mortiferes." Extracts from this work are included in a republication of the author's life of Calvin which appeared at Lyons in 1875. Other early accounts of Beza's life are that of Jacobus Laingeus—*De vita et moribus Theodori Beza*, etc., Paris, 1585, and that of Antonius Fayus (Antoine de la Faye)—*De vita et obitu D. Theodori Beza*, Geneva, 1606, 4°. Baum's *Theodore Beza nach handschriftlichen Quellen* (3 vols. Leipzig, 1843-1852) is by far the most exhaustive work that has appeared on the subject, but it follows the course of Beza's life only down to the year 1563. Professor Henry M. Baird's *Theodore Beza, the counsellor of the French Reformation, 1519-1605* (Heroes of the

Reformation, N. Y. and Lond. 1899, 8vo.) is a popular account of Beza's life and work. A detailed bibliography of Beza's publications is appended to Dr. Heinrich Heppe's *Theodore Beza: Leben und Ausgewählte Schriften*, which forms the sixth part of Hagenbach's *Leben der Väter und Begründer der reformirten Kirche* (Elberfeld, 1861, 8vo.) Two valuable critical estimates of Beza's work are A. Sayous' study in his *Études Littéraires sur les Écrivains François de la Reformation*, vol. I, and *Théodore de Bèze à Lausanne, Étude par Auguste Bernus* (Lausanne, 1900).

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here my indebtedness to Mr. H. H. Langton, Librarian of the University of Toronto. As general editor of the UNIVERSITY STUDIES he has been indefatigable in his efforts to eliminate textual errors, and his kindly interest in the volume has extended to the making of many valuable suggestions which I have been glad to incorporate in the introduction.

M. W. W.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.
May 5, 1906.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	
i. The life of Arthur Golding - - - - -	xi
ii. The *ABRAHAM SACRIFIANT* of Beza - -	xxxvii
iii. English versions of the Abraham and Isaac story - - - - - - - - - - - - -	xlix
iv. The relation of *LE VIEL TESTAMENT* plays to English versions - - - - -	lvi
v. Golding's translation - - - - - - -	lx
A TRAGEDIE OF ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE - - - -	[1]
Notes - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	[65]
Appendix: *ABRAHAM SACRIFIANT*, par Theodore de Besze - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	[89]

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Arthur Golding

In *Notes and Queries* (vol. x., p. 115) a correspondent seeks for fuller information than we now possess concerning the life of Arthur Golding. "It seems very strange," he says, "that such a celebrated man, and one who had such influential friends and connexions, and was also the owner of such extensive properties, should have suddenly disappeared, and that there should be no record of where he was buried or if he left any family." And yet, in this respect the fate of Golding was not different from that of the great majority of his literary brethren of the Elizabethan age. Unless manuscript sources at present inaccessible should some day throw more light on the subject, it would seem that there is little chance of adding very much to the confessedly scanty details of the life of one of the most important translators of an age when translation was esteemed almost as highly as original composition. The present study cannot pretend to furnish any very important contributions to the subject; its purpose is rather to bring together details from various printed and manuscript sources, and to present them in a more amplified form than has hitherto been attempted.

Arthur Golding was the descendant of a prosperous family which had resided in the County of Essex since the time of the Conquest, for in the Doomsday Book we find among the holders of lands in the hundred of Colchester "Goldinc 1 house."[1] The place-name Goldingham—"the town of the Goldings"—occurring as it does in the immediate vicinity of the extensive lands held by the family for many generations, would seem likewise to denote the antiquity and importance of the family.[2] In the reign of Edward I. we have record of a certain Warin Golding, of the town of Halsted, and in 1306 John Golding, of the same town, was witness to a deed of William de St. Martin.[3]

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1 *The Victoria History of the Counties of England—The County of Essex* vol i.

2 "Goldingham" is also a family name in Essex. V. Fuller's *Worthies of England*, vol. i, p. 360.

3 Morant's *Essex*, vol. ii, p. 328—Hinckford Hundred—Belchamp St. Pauls.

From the reign of Edward II. on, the name appears frequently in public documents. In a paper dated July 6, 1345, "de protectione pro quibusdam personis, qui cum Rege in obsequium suum ad partes transmarinas profecturi sunt," we find the name of Thomas Goldyng.[1] Another document which bears the date 1374 "de marinariis arestandis pro navibus et bargeis Regis" has the following item: "Johannes Goldyng, magister navis Regis vocatæ La Mighel de Hull, ad sexaginta et decem marinarios in comitatibus Suffolc' et Essex'.[2] Toward the close of the fifteenth century Thomas Golding of Grays, in Cavendish, Suffolk, and of Beauchamp St. Paul in Essex, married Agnes, daughter of Edm. Lutton.[3] On her death he "married Elizabeth, one of the daughters and coheirs of John Worthie [or Wortley?] of Blamsters in Halstead, Esq.,.....and had by her John Golding, Esq. of Pauls Belchamphall and Halstead."[4] This was Arthur Golding's father, and the following quotation from Morant regarding the lands which he held shows that he was a very prosperous gentleman; "He held a tenement here called Spicer's, 2 acres of arable in Chapel-feild, and several parcels of land of the Dean and Chapter in socage. He had also estates in Beauchamp Otton and Beauchamp St. Ethelbert and in Halsted, Worthies Place, Blomsters Maner, Aylewards Place, Pascalls, Picherds, Wynde Wells, etc., in Hempsted, a messuage called Blagden, and 86 acres of arable, 15 of meadow; in Bumpsted-Helion the maner of Boblowe. (t)

(t) Inquis. 2 Ed. VI., Nu. 78."[5]

John Golding's possession of such extensive properties is the more noteworthy in view of the fact that his elder brother, Roger, had been Thomas Golding's heir.

John Golding's first wife, Elizabeth, widow of Reginald Hamond of Ramsden Belhouse, was the daughter of Henry Stowe, Knt., and heiress of West Malling in Kent. She died on December 26, 1527, leaving to John Golding four children—

1 Rymer's *Foedera.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 Hunter's *Chorus Vatum* on the authority of a Harleian MS.

4 Morant, *op. cit.*

5 *Ibid.*

Thomas, William, Elizabeth, and Margaret. His second wife was Ursula, daughter and co-heir of William Merston of Horton, Surrey, by whom he had four sons—Henry, Arthur, George and Edward, and three daughters Mary, Dorothy and Frances.[1] John Golding became one of the auditors of the Exchequer, and the prominent position which several of his children came to occupy in later years was no doubt due in part to the father's successful career. He died on November 28, 1547.

Sir Thomas Golding, John Golding's eldest son and heir, owned valuable lands in Essex, some of which he is said to have secured by questionable means while acting in his capacity of Commissioner for certifying the Chantry lands. He was Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1561,[2] and of Essex alone in 1569.[3] His wife was one of the daughters and co-heirs of Thomas Royden of Peckham in Kent, and had been previously married to ———— Twisden.

Sir Thomas' eldest sister, Margaret, married John de Vere, sixteenth Earl of Oxford, and about 1545 she became the mother of Edward, the seventeenth Earl, whose name is a familiar one to all students of Elizabethan literature. He was a great favourite of Queen Elizabeth, and the story of his insult to Sidney on the tennis court is well known, for when the Queen forbade the duel which had been arranged as a result of Sidney's challenge to the Earl, the former withdrew to Wilton, and busied himself in composing the *Arcadia*. Edward de Vere died in 1604. His only sister, Mary, who had married Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby of Eresby, and after his death, Charles Tyrrell, Esq., had died in 1568.

None of the other members of John Golding's numerous family attained to the high worldly place occupied by his eldest son and eldest daughter. William, the second son, married Elizabeth, one of the daughters and co-heirs of Edmund West of Cornard, in Suffolk (she was the widow of John Bukenham, Esq.), and had two children—Edmund and Dorothy. His

1 Morant, from whom these facts are chiefly derived, makes no mention of the daughter, Mary. References to her are based on Hunter's *Chorus Vatum*.

2 Fuller, *Worthies of England*, vol. i, p. 368—Tho. Golding, mil.

3 *Ibid.*—Tho. Golding, Knt.

sister Elizabeth married Roger Wingfield of Norfolk. Of Arthur Golding's own brothers, Henry, who was heir to his mother, and who died on December 6, 1576, leaving a wife, Alice, the daughter of Clovill of Hemingfield in Essex, and George, who died on November 24, 1584, also leaving a wife, Mary, were both possessed of considerable property in Essex, to the greater part of which Arthur Golding succeeded at their deaths. Of his sisters, Mary became the wife of Anthony Broke, of Reading; Dorothy of Edmund D. Dockwra or Dockwather, by whom she became the mother of " 2 memorable sons," Arthur and Henry; and Frances, of Mathew Bacon of Shelfhanger in Norfolk.[1]

The year of Arthur Golding's birth is fixed for us by a legal document quoted in Morant's *Essex*. In connection with the fact that Henry Golding, who died in 1576, was possessed at that time of the manor of East Thorp and other lands in the Lexden Hundred we find the statement: " Arthur, his brother and next heir, then aged 40, succeeded him,(q)

(q) Inquis. 19 Eliz. Feb. 7." [2]

Accordingly we may set down 1536 as the year of his birth. Both Warton and Phillips say that he was a native of London. Of his education we know nothing definite, for although he is said to have been a member of Queen's College, Cambridge,[3] his name does not appear in the records of the College. Malone says that he was a fellow-commoner of Jesus College, Cambridge in 1552.[4] His famous nephew, the Earl of Oxford (then Lord Bulbeck) who was Golding's junior by only nine years, entered Queen's as a fellow commoner in November, 1558. It is practically certain, however, that Golding did not take a degree, or his name would not have appeared on the title-pages of his numerous books simply as " Arthur Gōlding, gentleman." Before the year 1563 we have no accurate information regarding his life. Hunter says that " it would seem that the poet was in the service of Sir Henry Sydney by the

1 Hunter (*op. cit.*) says that she married Montfaucon of Shassinger in Norfolk.

2 Morant, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 180.

3 V. Cooper's *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, vol. ii, p. 431.

4 Hunter, *op. cit.*

M.S. in Heber Library No. 1523; but this is doubtful."[1] Mr. Sidney Lee tells us that "in 1549 he was in the service of Protector Somerset, who wrote, 5 Oct., requesting him to solicit the aid of the Earl of Oxford's servants in repressing rebellion."[2] The letter in question reads as follows :

" We commend us unto you. And for the confidence we have in you, being our servant, we will and require you to solicit and give order for our very good Lord the Earl of Oxford's things, servants, and ordinary power, that he himself, and the same also, be in good readiness, whatsoever shall chance to require his service for the King's Majesty; whereof, if any occasion shall chance, we will signify by our letters. Thus we commit the order of the whole unto your good discretion, and will you to use herein convenient secrecy. From Hampton Court the 5th October, 1549.

Your loving Lord and Master,

" E. SOMERSET."

" To our loving servant,

——— Golding, Esquire." [3]

I do not know upon what authority it has been assumed that this letter was addressed to Arthur Golding, but surely that assumption is a mistake. In the copy of the letter which is here reproduced there is a blank before the name 'Golding.' If we remember that at this time Arthur Golding was just thirteen years of age, is it not absurd to think of the Protector's writing to him on such high matters, and referring to " the confidence we have in you " and " your good discretion "? The fact, however, that the services of a Golding are bespoken with the Earl of Oxford makes it inherently probable that the letter was addressed to a relative of Margaret Golding, wife of the sixteenth Earl. We can hardly be far wrong in assuming that her brother Sir Thomas, at this time a young man nearly thirty years of age, is the Golding in question; at any rate we may dismiss the idea that the letter was addressed to a lad of thirteen years.

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1 *Op. cit.*

2 V. article on "Arthur Golding" in *Dictionary of National Biography.*

3 "Somerset to Golding. Orig. St. P. Off. Domestic, 5th Oct. 1549." Quoted in P. F. Tytler's *England under the Reigns of Edward vi. and Mary.*

In 1563 Arthur Golding was receiver for his nephew Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, at that time a young man eighteen years of age, who had succeeded to the earldom during the previous year. The Earl was in ward to the Queen, and was now living with Sir William Cecil, master of the wards; it seems probable that Golding resided with his nephew for some time at Cecil's house in the Strand, for on April 2nd, 1563, he dedicated his translation of *The historie of Leonard Aretine* to Sir William Cecil, Knight, from Cecil-house in the Strand. The dedication of *The Histories of Trogus Pompeius*, i. e. Justin's *History*, is dated December 23, 1564, and is also from Cecil-house; at Cecil-house, too, is dated the dedication to the first four books of Ovid, which was written in 1564, although it did not appear until the following year.

For the next two or three years Golding seems to have devoted himself assiduously to the work of translating Cæsar and Ovid,—the work which was to give him his real claim to a place in literary history, for the great majority of the voluminous translations of his later life were of a religious character, and of more or less ephemeral interest. It was a period of great activity in rendering accesible to English readers the classics of the ancient world, and the boundless curiosity of the Elizabethans regarding the literature of the past assured the translator an appreciative audience, who would display no over-niceness in their critical estimate of his work. In 1562 Thomas Twine had completed the translation of the *Aeneid* which Thomas Phaer had already (between 1555 and 1560) brought down to the beginning of the tenth book. Their labour earned them the applause of their contemporaries although the mechanical halting fourteeners were hardly worthy of the model set by Gavin Douglas in his translation of the second and fourth books in 1513. Between 1559 and 1561 Jasper Heywood had translated three of Seneca's tragedies, and the whole of Seneca had been rendered into English by 1580. In 1582 Stanyhurst's translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid*,—a remarkable work—was published to show the virtue of non-rhyming classical metres as compared to the English fashion of rhyming. The *Andria* of

Terence had been translated before 1530. Later in the century we have such noble work as that of Lord North in his translation of Plutarch, and that of Chapman, whose translation of Homer has brought him fame made doubly secure by the admiration of Keats. In the work of translating *Cæsar's Commentaries* Golding had been anticipated by John Brend who had proceeded as far as the middle of the fifth book; this translation was put into Golding's hands, and he continued the work from the point at which Brend had concluded. Later he translated afresh the earlier part for the sake of uniformity. The volume was published by William Seres in 1565,[1] and the dedication to Cecil on October 12th of that year is dated from the family seat in Essex—Belchamp St. Paul. In this connection we should perhaps notice the one other partial translation of *Cæsar's Commentaries* which had been made prior to this time, viz. *Cæsar's Commentaryes newly translated owte of latin in to Englyshe as much as concerneth thys Realme of England sumtyme callyd Brytayne.* The translation which is ascribed to that "Italianate Englishman," John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who was the first classical scholar of the English Renaissance, was published by Rastall about 1530. Tiptoft is also credited with a translation of the *De Amicitia* of Cicero.[2]

Golding's *magnum opus*, the work with which his name was to be associated by succeeding generations, was his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the first four books of which he published in 1565—the same year in which he published his translation of Cæsar. The volume was printed by William Seres, is dedicated to "his singular good Lorde Robert Earle of Leycester, etc.," and is dated from Cecil House. In 1567 appeared the complete translation of the fifteen books which was also printed by Seres and dedicated to Leicester.[3]

Golding was not the first Englishman to attempt the translation of part of Ovid into English. Caxton had turned into

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1 Joseph Ames, *Typographical Antiquities* (London, 1749), p. 249.

2 Lowndes, *Bibliographer's Manual.* V. also Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, p. 25.

3 Edited by W. H. D. Rouse and published by the De La More Press, London, 1904. The introduction quotes in full Golding's dedication to the first four books which were printed in 1565.

English prose the last five books of the *Metamorphoses*,[1] but the work does not seem to have been printed until 1819, when it appeared in quarto form—from a MS. in the Pepysian collection (No. 2124) at Cambridge, and was presented to the members of the Roxburghe Club by George Hibbert, Esq.[2] A black letter quarto, published by Wynkin de Worde in 1513, contained *The Flores of Ovide de Arte Amandi, with theyr Englysshe afore them*.[3] In 1560 appeared *The Fable of Ovid treating of Narcissus, translated out of Latin into Englysh Mytre, with a Moral therevnto, very pleasante to rede*, printed by Thomas Hackette in quarto form. At the end is the signature: "Quod T. H.," which Ritson confidently interprets as Thomas Howell.[4] In 1565, the year in which Golding's edition of the first four books appeared, Thomas Peend or De La Peend published *The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis*, London, 8vo., from the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*. The volume was printed by Thos. Colwell, and in the preface the author asserts that " he had translated a great part of the *Metamorphosis*, intending to complete a version of *Ovid*, but was led to relinquish his design on finding that Golding was engaged on the same undertaking."[5] Before the end of the century practically all of Ovid's works had been translated into English : Turberville's *Heroides* appeared in 1567 ; Underdowne's *Ibis* in 1569 ; Churchyard's *Tristia* in 1580 ; Marlowe's *Elegies* and the *Amores* in 1597, and Browne's *Remedie of Love* in 1599.

Golding's work was immediately recognized by his contemporaries as a notable piece of translation, as is evidenced by the many commendations it called forth ; its popularity is attested by its frequent re-publication, in 1575, 1576, 1584, 1587, 1593 (by two different publishers), 1603, 1612, and 1675. Until the appearance of Sandys' version in 1626 (he had published the first five books before 1621) the pre-eminence of Golding's translation was not disputed. Shakespeare was

1 Not the whole work, however, as Mr. Rouse seems to state. V. *op. cit.*, p. ii.

2 Lowndes, *op. cit.*

3 *Ibid.* 4 *Ibid.*

5 Corser's *Collectanea Anglo-Poctica.* (Chetham Society, vol. ci, pp. 9-17.)

well acquainted with Ovid through this medium,[1] and to his familiarity with it is due a very large proportion of his mythological references, a fact which would have secured its modern publication as a part of " Shakespeare's Library," one would have supposed, before the year 1904. It may be of interest here to notice some of the many sixteenth century encomiums that were pronounced upon Golding's work. In 1566—before the publication of the complete translation—a certain T. B. in a poem prefixed to John Studley's English version of Seneca's *Agamemnon*, ranks Richard Edwards, a contributor to *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, with Phaer, Jasper Heywood, Googe and other translators of the period, but especially with Golding :

" With him also, as seemeth me,
Our Edwards may compare ;
Who nothing gyuing place to him
Doth syt in egall chayre."[2]

and again

" Nor *Goldinge* can haue lesse renoume,
Whych *Ouid* dyd translate ;
And by the thondryng of hys verse
Hath set in chayre of state."[3]

In 1577 Thomas Blener Hasset in the Induction to his *Complaint of Cadwallader* in his *Second Part of the Mirror for Magistrates* laments the contemporary use of rhyme, and holds it responsible for the fact that there is a great difference between the work of the modern translator and that of his original—" betwixt Buchurst and Homer ; betwixt Phaer and Virgill ; betwixt Turberville and Tibullus ; betwixt Golding and Ovid ; betwixt George Gascon and Seneca."[4] Abraham Fleming in the list affixed to his *Bright burning Beacon forwarning all wise Virgins to trim their lampes against the comming of the Bridegroome*,—a tract on the earthquake of

1 V. an interesting note in Rouse's introduction on an Aldine Ovid (1502) now in the Bodleian, which may possibly have belonged to Shakespeare (p. ii).

2 Warton's *History of English Poetry*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, vol. iv, p. 217.

3 *Ibid*, vol. iv, p. 275.

4 Quoted by Schelling in *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth*, p. 24.

1580—mentions Golding as one of the six "noted poets" who had written on the same subject.[1] Arthur Hall, in the dedication to his translation of Homer's *Iliad* (1581) commends Golding's English version which he considers the equal of its original.[2] Some passages from Golding's epistle to the Earl of Leicester prefaced to the complete translation of Ovid in 1567 were paraphrased by Peele in his *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584) as Mr. Dyce has pointed out.[3] Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), says: "Equally with him [Phaer] may I well adioyne Master Arthur Golding, for hys labour in englishing *Ouids Metamorphosis*, for which Gentleman, surely our Country hath for many respects greatly to gyue God thankes: as far him which hath taken infinite paynes without ceasing, trauelleth as yet indefatigably, and is addicted without society, by his continuall laboure, to profit this nation and speeche in all kind of good learning."[4] And after giving a number of extracts from Phaer's translation of Virgil he continues: "And in trueth the like comparisons, may you choose out through the whole translations of the Metamorphosis by Master Golding who (considering both their Coppyes) hath equally deserued commendations for the beautifying of the English speeche."[5] Puttenham's praise is no less pronounced in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589): "Since him [Phaer] followed Maister Arthure Golding, who with no lesse commendation turned into English meetre the Metamorphosis of *Ouide*,"[6] and again he commends "*Phaer* and *Golding* for a learned and well corrected verse, specially in translation cleare and very faithfully answering their authours intent."[7] In the same year (1589) appeared Greene's *Menaphon*, and in the prefatory address "To the Gentlemen Students of both Universities" Nash has the following reference to Golding: "And in this page of praise, I cannot omit aged

1 Collier's *Poetical Decameron*, i, p. 117.
2 *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Hall.
3 *The Works of Peele*, ed. Bullen, vol. i, p. 18, note 4.
4 *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Haslewood, vol. ii, p. 35.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
6 *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 49.
7 *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 51.

Arthur Golding, for his industrious toile in Englishing *Ouids Metamorphosis* besides manie other exquisite editions of Diuinitie, turned by him out of the French tongue into our own."[1] In 1591 Sir John Harington in his *Apologie of Poetrie*, prefixed to his translation of *Orlando Furioso*, quotes Golding's work approvingly,[2] and Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598) names Golding among those who " for their learned translations are of good note among vs."[3] The author of *The First Booke of the Preservation of King Henry VII.*, published in 1599, " confesses and acknowledges that we have many excellent and singular good poets in this our age, as Maister Spenser, that was, Maister Gowlding, Doctor Phayer, etc."[4] There is therefore abundant evidence that Golding's labours were not unappreciated by his contemporaries.

By far the greater part of our information regarding Golding's life is derived from the dedication of his numerous works, and does not usually extend further than to enable us to state that on a certain date Golding was at a certain place. We have already noticed that he lived at Cecil-house in the Strand during 1563, 1564 and 1565, and that on October 12, 1565, he was at Belchamp St. Paul. From here he dedicated to Cecil his *Caesar's Commentaries* and the first edition of the *Metamorphoses* on the same date. Two years later he was at Berwick, for his dedication to Leicester of the completed translation of the *Metamorphoses* is signed, " At Barwicke the xx. of Aprill, 1567."[5] On October 12, 1569, he was in London, and on March 10 and March 31, 1570, he was at Belchamp St. Paul, from which place he dedicated to Sir Walter Mildmay his translation of *A Postil or Orderly Disposing of Certeine Epistles*, etc., by David Chytraeus. Golding was again in London on June 12, 1572,[6] and then we lose sight of him for three years, although translations from his pen continued to appear in

1 Greene's *Works*, ed. Grosart, vol. vi, p. 20.

2 Haslewood, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 123.

3 *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 156.

4 Quoted by Arber in his preface to Stanyhurst's *Æneis*, pp. xx and xxi

5 This epistle is in 'fourteeners' and extends to 616 lines.

6 The translation of Beza's *A bryefe and necessary Catechisme* is dedicated to Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, and the prefatory letter signed by Arthur Golding concludes : "Written at London the 12 of June, 1572."

London. The title-page of his translation of Beza's *Le Sacrifice d'Abraham* informs us that it was "Finished at Pouules Belchamp in Essex, the XI. of August, 1575." Warton thinks that he contributed some verses to the entertainment at Kenilworth in that year, but he bases this opinion only on the strength of Gascoigne's statement that certain verses were written by "Master Goldingham,"—a not uncommon name at that time. On January 6, 1576, Golding was living at Clare in Suffolk.

Between 1576 and 1585 Golding must have spent a great part of his time in Essex, for he was becoming a great landed proprietor chiefly owing to the death of his brothers Henry and George. Morant's *Essex* furnishes us with detailed information regarding Golding's life in this capacity. His brother Henry had become possessed of the manor of East Thorp, part of which he had purchased from Robert Waldgrave on May 6, 1564, and the remainder, together with the advowson of the church, from John Bacon on October 7, 1576 (Lett. pat. 6. 12 Eliz.). "He dyed 6 Decemb. 1576, seized not only of his maner, but also of Oldholt tenement, and several lands and tenements in Birch and Messing. Arthur his brother and next heir, then aged 40 succeeded him (Inquis. 19 Eliz. Feb. 7)."[1] Golding seems to have intended to dispose of this property almost immediately: "On the 20th of Novemb. (1577?) he procured a license to alienate this whole estate to Richard Atkins, Gent. and Elianore his wife (Book of Alienat.)" As we shall see however, he was still possessed of East Thorp in 1585. Other lands inherited from this same brother he kept in his possession till 1591: "Besides which [Little Birch and East Thorp] he [Henry Golding] had in this parish Cocks woods; Cocks lands, and Oldholt tenement; a messuage called Moothes containing 50 acres; a tenement and two crofts called Wasselings; and a moiety of messuages and lands called Garlands and Ives crofts, alias Derby lands. (Inquis. 19 Eliz. and 16 Vaco.) His brother Arthur Golding succeeded him, and presented to the rectory 19 May, 1591 (Inquis. 19 Eliz.). Alice Golding widow, paid Ward silver for this maner in the

[1] Morant's *Essex*, vol. ii, p. 180—Lexden Hundred.

23rd. Eliz., 1581 (Rot. Curiæ Hund. de Lexden). Of Golding it was purchased by John, Lord Peter."[1] Arthur Golding's relations with this sister-in-law seem to have been far from pleasant, as is evidenced by the following extract from Hunter's manuscript : " There is a bill in the Exchequer 14 Feb., 1585, to Lord Burghley from his daily orator Arthur Golding—Whereas his late brother Henry Golding Esq., deceased left him in present possession only the manor of East Thorpe which was encumbered, & gave the manor of Little Biral [Birch?] with other lands to Alice his wife, with a clause prohibiting said Arthur from molesting her ;—and whereas one Robert Crispe a very troublesome and unquiet person marrying one Mary Waldegrave daughter of the said Alice & wife of one Robert Waldegrave, Esq. yet alive and undivorced, under colour of that unlawful marriage obtained of the said Alice a lease of the said Henry Goldings chief mansion house & has committed waste and spoil—He prays that he may proceed against Crispe without incurring the penalty of his brothers will."[2] What would seem to be a reference to the same difficulty occurs in the ' Proceedings in Chancery ' of Queen Elizabeth's reign in a suit in which Arthur Golding is plaintiff and Robert Cryspe defendant. The entry refers to a document which is " only an answer " and which " respects a lease granted to one Anne [Alice?] Goldinge, but of what lands or where situated does not appear."[3]

From his brother George, Arthur Golding also inherited property. On March 7th, 1580, he bought from him and Mary his wife the manor of Nether-hall, Gestingthorp, but sold it on March 2, 1585, to John Coo or Coe.[4] In the meantime George Golding had died (November 24, 1584) and Arthur inherited from him the manors of Waltons and Nether-hall, and of Jackletts, Fanbridge and Amys land, all of which he sold on March 1, 1595, to Thomas Mildmay, Esq., eldest son of William

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1 Morant, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 184—Lexden Hundred.

2 *Chorus Vatum.*

3 *Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery—Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i. G, g, 13, p. 379.

4 Morant, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 307—Hinckford Hundred.

Mildmay, of Springfield Barnes, Esq.[1] This bequest, also, seems to have involved Golding in Chancery proceedings. A certain Arthur Kempe appears as plaintiff against " Anthony Golding, esquire, and Mary Golding, widow " in a suit the object of which was " to protect plaintiff's title under an assignment of lease." The " premisses " are set forth as follows : " The manor of Waltons in Purley demised by the Earl of Oxford to George Golding deceased, who assigned the lease to plaintiff, and afterwards purchased the inheritance of the Earl."[2] The Anthony Golding here referred to must surely be Arthur Golding.

That Golding spent a considerable portion of these years in Essex looking after his property interests we may be sure, and the demand which they made on his time and attention is probably reflected in the fact that after 1577 his translations become much less numerous. In that year he had a house in the parish of All-hallows on the Wall, from which place he dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton his translation of Seneca's *De Beneficiis* on March 17, 1577-8, and we may assume that he spent many years partly in London, partly in Essex. His *Discourse upon the Earth quake*(1580), which is his only original prose work, inveighs strongly against the profanation of the Sabbath which " is spent full heathenishly in taverning, tipling, gaming, playing and beholding of Beare-baytings and stage-playes," and the invective sounds like that of a man who was familiar with the London life of the period. Indeed we may safely conclude that at this time Golding was one of the most widely known literary men in London. We have already seen that he received the warmest praise from many contemporary writers, and although he was an ardent Puritan he numbered among his patrons the most famous statesmen and noblemen of his day. The list includes Sir William Cecil (Lord Burleigh), the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Oxford, Sir Walter Mildmay, the Earl of Huntingdon, the Earl of Essex, Sir William Drewrie, Sir Thomas Bromley, Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Cobham and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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1 *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 346—Dengey Hundred.

2 *Calendars of the Proceedings in Chancery—Queen Elizabeth*, K, k, 4, vol. ii, p. 124.

Sir Philip Sidney evidently looked upon him as a worthy craftsman.[1] Sidney had begun a translation of his friend De Mornay's treatise *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion*, and just before leaving England for the fatal field of Zutphen, he requested Golding to complete the work ; Golding accepted the task and published the book a few months after Sidney's death. A writer in *Notes and Queries* has added to the scanty details of Golding's life the fact that he was a member of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries : " I have a copy of Weever's *Ancient Funerall Monuments* which once belonged to William Burton, the historian of Leicestershire; on a fly-leaf at the end of the volume is the following list in the autograph of that celebrated antiquary, etc."[2] The list is entitled : " Antiquarii temp. Eliz. Reg." and the twenty-first name is that of ' Arthur Golding.'

Evil days seem to have come upon Golding after 1595, in which year as we have already seen he disposed of the last of his property in Essex. In dedicating to Lord Cobham, the Warden of the Cinque Ports, his translation of Jaques Hurault's *Politicke, Moral, and Martial Discourses*, he refers in the opening sentence to the troubles he has suffered : " Forasmuch as being unknowne to your good Lordship, otherwise than by report, yet notwithstanding I have tasted of your goodness and favour, to my great comfort in my troubles, of the which when God wil I hope I shall be well discharged." This epistle, which contains a long patriotic exposition of the blessings of England and the virtues of the Queen, is dated January 27, 1595.[3] We have a rather ambiguous reference to Golding in Dr. Dee's *Diary* under date of September 30th, 1597 : " John Crockar, my good servant, had leave to go and see his parents. He went with Barthilmew Hikman and Robert Charles toward Branbroke, with Arthur Golding to cure of his fistula. John Crocker intendeth to returne about Easter or at Whitsuntide next. God be his spede."[4] What-

[1] Mr. Sidney Lee and Mr. Rouse say that he was a friend of Sidney, but I have found no evidence of the fact. V. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v. 'Golding,' and the reprint of the *Metamorphoses* (1904) p. vi.

[2] *Notes and Queries*, Series I, vol. v, p. 365.

[3] A copy is in the Bodleian Library.

[4] *Dr. Dee's Diary*, Camden Society, p. 60.

ever be the meaning of the note it can hardly be that Dr. Dee undertook to cure Golding, as Mr. Lee interprets it,[1] and of course it is quite possible that the reference is to another Arthur Golding altogether. Until 1605 we have no further knowledge of Golding's movements. In that year he addressed to the Privy Council a petition which suggests that the demand for his works had made the copyright valuable : "In consequence of a petition addressed by Mr. Golding to the Privy Council of James I., that monarch made order that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Attorney-General should take into consideration the matters referred to in the petition, and grant to Mr. Golding the sole right of printing such books of his as they might consider meet for the benefit of the church and common-wealth, and that the Attorney-General should draw a book ready for his majesty's signature containing the grant thereof to the petitioner, a blank being left for the number of years, to be filled up according to his majesty's pleasure. This order is dated 25 July, 1605, after which time we can find no trace of him.[2] The year of Golding's death is not known.[3] Cooper says that he married the widow of George Forster, but we do not know whether he left any family nor where he was buried.

Considering the multiplicity of dates which have been given above it is remarkable how little we really know about Golding as a man. Almost all of his books were translations which of course reveal little or nothing regarding his personality, although the fact that he busied himself chiefly with translating the works of the French reformers proves that he was a zealous upholder of the English Puritan cause, and an admirer of the great representatives of the Huguenots in France—Calvin, Beza, Coligny, etc. In his *Discourse on the Earthquake*, as we have seen, he voices one of the chief complaints of the Puritanism of his time, and his prefaces and dedications bear witness to his earnest piety and zeal. Compare for instance, the

1 V. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v. 'Golding.'

2 Cooper's *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, vol. ii, p. 431.

3 Professor Courthope gives no authority for his statement that Golding died in 1606 (*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, vol. ii, p. 140). W. Davenport Adams in his *Dictionary of the Drama* (1904) says that he died in 1570 !

following extract from his preface to the translation of De Mornay[1] : " If any Atheist, Infidel, or Jew, having read this work with advisement, shall yet denye the Christian religion to be the true and only path-way to eternall felicitie, and all other religions to be mere vanitie and wickednesse, he must needes shew himself to be either utterly voyd even of human sence, or els obstinatly or wilfully to impugn the manifest trueth against the continuall testimonie of his owne conscience."[2] At the same time Golding did not antagonize even such a bitter partisan as Nash, from which circumstance we may conclude that his Puritanism was not of the kind that was given to controversy. Indeed his wide learning, his interest in classic literature, and his patriotic enthusiasm over the improvement or vindication of " verse or prose in English," as expressed in his commendatory stanzas prefixed to Baret's *Alvearie*, would not lead us to expect to find him serving among the followers of Martin Mar-prelate. These stanzas—Golding's only original work in poetical form except the dedicatory epistles—have never been reprinted as far as I am aware, and may perhaps rightly claim a place here :

Arthur Golding to the Reader.

The plesant iuice that Prime of yeere doth yeeld
In herbe, in flower, in leafe, in plant, or tree,
By natures gift abroad in frith and feeld,
Or mans deuice in gardens not so free
As faire and finelie kept, the busie Bee
With restlesse trauell gathereth to his Hyue,
To how great use, they knowe that knowe to thryue.

And *Barret* here (good Reader) doth present
A Hyue of honie to thy gentle hand,
By tract of time in painefull labor spent :
Well wrought, and brought to such perfection and
Good purpose, as (if truth be rightly scand)
Thou art to blame, but if thou be his detter
Of earned thankes, and fare by him the better.

[1] Quoted in Zouch's *Memoirs of Sir Philip Sidney* (York, 1808, p. 368, note).

[2] "Post Calvinum et Bezam nullus theologorum tam bene scripsit ut Mornaeus." *Scaligerana.*

How fit the Tytle of this present Booke
Doth hit the matter written in the same,
Thou shalt perceiue the better if thou looke
Throughout the worke, which well doth brooke his name.
For underneath this Hiue yet small in fame,
Of fower Tungs the flowers hyued bee,
In one sweete iuice to serue the turne of thee.

Of truth, the skill and labour was not small
To set ech Inglish Phraze in his due place,
And for to match the Latin therewithall,
Of either Language keeping still the grace,
And orderly the Greeke to interlace,
And last of all to ioyne the French theretoo :
These things (I saie) requyrde no small adoo.

And furthermore right well thou mayst espie,
There lakt in him no forewardnesse of minde
To haue set downe a sownd Orthographie :
Through want whereof all good inditers find
Our Inglishe tung driuen almost out of kind,
Dismembred, hacked, maymed, rent, and torne,
Defaced, patched, mard, and made a skorne.

For who is he that rightly can discerne
The case, the kind, and number of the Nowne ?
For my instruction gladly I would lerne,
How men might trie what writer setteth downe
The Article aright, or who doth drowne
The Pronowne by misplacing it, as now
Most wryters doe, and yet they marke not how.

I thinke it would a good Gramarian poze
To giue iust rules of Deriuation,
And Composition, as our writing goes.
And yet no tung of other Nation
Hath either greater grace or store of those,
Than Inglish hath : yee would not thinke ywis
How rich in Composition Inglishe is.

Moreouer, how shall men directly find
The Conjugation, Number, Person, Tence,
And mode of Verbes togither in their kind?
What man I praie can stand in iust defence
Of due Construction both of wordes and sence ?
And if to Verse men further will proceede,
Which yeeldes lesse skope and asketh greater heede:

How shall a man assure true quantitie
Of time or tune ? Or if he would expresse
The diffrence, and the natiue propertie,
Of brode North speech and Sowthren smoothednesse :
How might he set it downe with cumlinesse,
Where men in writing doe so fondly dote,
As nought is done by rule, but all by rote ?

But were there once a sound Orthographie
Set out by learning and aduised skill,
(Which certesse might be done full easilie)
And then confirmed by the Souereines will,
(For else would blind and cankred custome still
His former errors wilfully maintaine
And bring us to his *Chaos* backe againe :)

No doubt but men should shortly find there is
As perfect order, as firme certeintie,
As grounded rules to trie out things amisse,
As much sweete grace, as great varietie
Of wordes and phrazes, as good quantitie
For verse or prose in Inglish euery waie,
As any comen Language hath this daie.

And were wee giuen as well to like our owne,
And for two clense it from the noisome weede
Of affectation which hath ouergrowne
Ungraciously the good and natiue seede,
As for to borrowe where wee have no neede :
It would pricke neere the learned tungs in strength,
Perchaunce and match mee some of them at length.

Wherefore good Reader yeeld thy furtherance
To mend the things that yet are out of square,
Thou hast a help thy purpose to aduaunce,
And meane to ease thy greatest peece of care.
And he that hath done this for thy welfare,
Upon thy freendely fauor and regard,
May chaunce to trauell further afterward.

Finis.

It is difficult for us to reconcile the facts that Go'ding was an ardent Puritan and that he was also the translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The compromising nature of his task seems to have troubled him somewhat, for the long introductory epistle to Leicester, in the main an analysis and moral interpretation of Ovid, is also an attempted justification of the translator's work. After declaring in the self-lauding fashion of the time that as a result of his labour he expects "with eternal fame above the stars to mount" he proceeds to unfold the hidden significance of Ovid's tales throughout each of the fifteen books :

"As for example in the tales of Daphne turn'd to Bay
A mirror of virginity appear unto us may."

Let no man marvel that he ascribes to the one and only God what the ancients ascribed to many. He is strongly inclined to agree with those who hold that the ancients " took their first occasion of these things from Holy Writ," and he draws an elaborate parallel between the account of creation as given in *Genesis* and that given by Ovid. To justify " the vices in this present work, in lively colours penn'd " gives the author greater trouble, and he offers the unconvincing and conventional defense which contemporary playwrights were offering to Golding's co-religionists :

"For sure these fables are not put in writing to th'intent
To further or allure to vice : but rather this is meant,
That men beholding what they be when vice doth reign instead
Of virtue, should not let their lewd affections have the head."

To accomplish this moral purpose is his chief aim in the work, —not " wreaths of bays, nor name of Poet, no, nor meed." " But why seem I these doubts to cast ?" he continues, as though not more than half convinced himself, and he concludes with declaring that if any cull evil instead of good from his pages " the fault is theirs, not mine, they must confess." The address " To the Reader " betrays the same uneasiness, and the author beseeches those who read to " take these works as fragrant flowers," warning them at the same time that the spider may convert the essence of flowers into poison. The same idea seems to have been in his mind when he wrote the motto for the title-page :

"With skill, heede, and judgement, this worke must be read,
For else to the Reader it standes in small stead."

Golding was endowed with a considerable degree of real literary ability. The " fourteener " is not a measure calculated to impress favorably a modern ear, but there are many passages in the *Metamorphoses* of which the spirited movement and the author's enthusiastic identification of himself with his subject make the reader forget that the work is not original composition. On the other hand it is inevitable in so long a piece of translation that there should be passages which are suggestive of hack-work; occasionally the metre is halting and awkward, the rhyme forced, and the translation devoid of charm. We may accept as just Meres' assignment to Golding of a position among those who "for their learned translations are of good note among us." Warton's estimate needs no modification : " His style is poetical and spirited, and his versification clear : his manner ornamental and diffuse yet with a sufficient observance of the original."[1] Mr. Sidney Lee says that "it is full of life throughout, and at time reaches a high poetic level."[2] The *Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice* is an unusually successful piece of translation, in which the author's happy rendering of the lyrics is equalled by his skill in preserving the simple effectiveness of the pathetic and tragic passages. We may agree with War-

[1] *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, ed. Hazlitt. iv. 283.
[2] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

ton in regretting that Golding gave so much of his time to translation, for one cannot but feel that the translator of Beza's play might have added something of permanent worth to the poetry of the Elizabethan age, had he devoted his original poetic genius to subjects more promising than the praise of a dictionary and the orthography and grammar of English speech.

The following list of Golding's works I have compiled from Hunter's MS. notes, Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*, Cooper's *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, the Catalogues of the British Museum and Bodleian Libraries, and Mr. Sidney Lee's article on Golding in the *Dictionary of National Biography* :

1. A briefe treatise concerning the burnynge of Bucer and Phagius at Cambrydge in the tyme of Quene Mary, with theyr restitution in the time of our most gracious soverayne Lady that nowe is, etc. [An anti-Popish pamphlet translated from the Latin, London, 16mo., 1562.]

2. The history of Leonard Aretine, concerning the warres betweene the Imperialls & the Gothes for the possession of Italy. A worke very pleasant & profitable. Translated out of Latin into English. [Dedicated to Sir William Cecil and printed by Rowland Hall, London, 16mo., 1563.]

3. Thabridgemente of the Histories of Trogus Pompeius, gathered & written in the Laten tung, by the famous Historiographer Justine, etc. [Dedicated to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and printed by Thomas Marsh, 4to., 1564 ; "newlie conferred with the Latin copye, and corrected by the Translator," London, 4to., 1570, 1578.]

4. The eyght bookes of Caius Iulius Cæsar conteyning his martiall exploytes in the Realme of Gallia and the Countries bordering vpon the same, etc. [Dedicated to Sir William Cecil from Belchamp St. Paul on October 12, 1565 ; published at London, 8vo., 1565, 1590.]

5. The Fyrst Fower Bookes of P. Ouidius Nasos Worke, intitled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into Englishe meter. [Dedicated to Robert, Earl of Leicester, from Cecil-house, December 23, 1564 ; published by Willyam Seres, London, 4to., 1565.]

6. The xv. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meteer. [Dedicated to Robert, Earl of Leicester, from Barwicke, the xx. of Aprill, 1567 ; printed by Willyam Seres, London, 4to., 1567. Reprinted in 1575, 1576, 1584, 1587, 1593 (by two different publishers), 1603, 1612.]

7. John Caluin his Treatise concerning offences, whereby at this day diuers are feared, & many also are quite withdrawen from the pure doctrine of the Gospell..... transl. out of Latine. [London, 8vo., 1567.]

8. A Postill, or Expositions of the Gospels read in the Churches of God on Sundayes & feast days of Saincts. Written by Nich. Heminge. [Dedicated to Sir Walter Mildmay, and printed in London, 4to., 1569, 1574, 1577, 1579.]

9. A Postil or Orderly Disposing of certeine Epistles vsually red in the Church of God vppon the Sundayes & Holydayes throughout the whole yeere. Written in Latin by Dauid Chytræus. [Dedicated to Sir Walter Mildmay, from 'Powle Belchamp,' on March 31, 1570 ; and printed in London, 4to., 1570, 1577.]

10. The Psalmes of Dauid and others. With M. John Caluins Commentaries. [Dedicated to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and printed in London, 4to., 1571, 1576. A copy of the first edition is in the Newberry library, Chicago. The dedication is strongly antipapal.]

11. A Booke of Christian Question and Answers. Wherein are set forth the cheef points of the Christian religion in manner of an abridgement..... Written in Latin by the lerned clarke Theodore Beza Vezelius. [Dedicated to Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, and printed in London, 8vo., 1572, 1577, 1578, 1586. The volume contains 90 leaves besides the dedication.]

12. A Confutation of the Popes Bull which was published more than two yeres agoe against Elizabeth the most gracious queene of England, Fraunce and Ireland, and against the noble Realme of England..... By Henry Bullenger the Elder. [A translation from the Latin, printed in London, 4to., 1572.]

13. Sermons of M. John Caluine vpon the Epistle of Saincte Paule to the Galathians. [Dedicated to Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and printed in London, 4to., 1574 and n. d. The sermons occupy 329 leaves.]

14. Sermons by M. John Calvin vpon the Booke of Job. Translated out of French. [Dedicated to Robert, Earl of Essex, and printed in London, fol. 1574, 1580, 1584. Lowndes says it is dedicated to Leicester, and that it contains 159 sermons on 751 pages, double columns.]

15. A Catholike Exposition vpon the Reuelation of Sainct John. Collected by M. Augustine Marlorate, out of diuers notable Writers whose names ye shal find in the page following. [Dedicated to Sir Walter Mildmay, and printed in London, 4to., 1574.]

16. A Justification or Cleering of the Prince of Orange, etc. [Printed in London, 1575.]

17. The Warfare of Christians: Concerning the conflict againts the Fleshe, the World, and the Deuill. Translated out of Latine. [Dedicated to Sir William Drewrie, and printed in London, 8vo., 1576.]

18. The Lyfe of the most godly valeant and noble capteine & maintener of the trew Christian Religion in Fraunce, Jasper Colignie Shatilion sometyme greate Admirall of Fraunce. Translated out of Latin. [Printed in London, 8vo., 1576.]

19. An Edict, or Proclamation set forthe by the Frenche Kinge vpon the Pacifying of the Troubles in Fraunce, with the Articles of the same Pacification: Read and published in the presence of the sayd King, sitting in his Parliament, the XIIIJ. day of May, 1576. Translated out of Frenche. [Printed in London, 16mo., 1576.]

20. The Sermons of M. John Caluin vpon the Epistle of S. Paule too the Ephesians. [Dedicated to Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, and printed in London, 4to., 1577. The sermons occupy 347 leaves.]

21. A Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice. Written in french by *Theodore Beza*. ..... Finished at Pouules Belchamp in Essex, the XI. of August, 1575. ['Imprinted at London, by Thomas Vantroullier, dwelling in the Blacke Friers,' 1577.]

22. The woorke of the excellent Philosopher Lucius Annæus Seneca concerning Benefyting..... Translated out of Latin. [Dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton from Golding's house in the parish of All-Hallows-on-the-Wall, London, 17 March, 1577-8, and printed in London, 4to., 1578.]

23. A discourse vpon the Earthquake that hapned throughe this realme of England and other places of Christendom, the sixt of Aprill, 1580. [Printed in London by Henry Binneman, 16mo., 1580.]

24. The ioyful and royal entertainment of the ryght high and mightie prince, Francis the Frenche Kings only brother, Duke of Brabande. ..... into his noble citie of Antwerpe. tr. out of Frenche by A. Golding. [Printed in London for William Ponsonby, 1582, 8vo. The author writes the account because "an Historie is the Schoolemistresse of mans life." A copy is in the Bodleian.]

25. The Sermons of M. John Caluin vpon the fifth booke of Moses, called Deuteronomie : Faithfully gathered word for word as he preached them in open Pulpet. ..... Translated out of French. [Dedicated to Sir Thomas Bromley, and printed in London, fol. 1583. There are 200 sermons occupying 1247 pages in double columns.]

26. The Rare and Singuler worke of Pomponius Mela, That excellent and worthy Cosmographer, of the situation of the world..... with the Longitude and Latitude of euerie Kingdome, Regent, Prouince, Riuers, Mountaines, Citties and Countries. [Dedicated to Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, on Feb. 6, 1584-5, and printed in London, 4to., 1585.]

27. The Excellent and Pleasant Worke of Iulius Solinus Polyhistor. Contayning the noble actions of humaine creatures, the secretes & prouidence of nature ..... with many maruailous things and strange antiquities ..... Translated out of Latin. [Printed in London, 4to., 1587 ; re-issued with Pomponius Mela in 1590. A copy of the 1587 edition is in the Newberry Library, Chicago.]

28. A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian Religion, written in French ; Against Atheists, Epicures Paynims, Iewes, Mahumetists, &c. By Philip of Mornay,

Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begunne to be translated by sir Philip Sidney, knight, and at his request finished by Arth. Golding. [Dedicated to Robert, Earl of Leicester, and printed in London, 4to., 1587, 1589, 1592, 1604 (revised and corrected by Thomas Wilcocks). With additional corrections, 1617, V. Fox Bourne, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 407-11, and *Censura Literaria*, II, 175.]

29. Politicke, Moral and Martial Discourses. Written in French by M. Iaques Hurault. [Dedicated to William, Lord Cobham, warden of the cinque ports, and published in London, 4to., 1595.]

30. An exhortation to england to Repent, made in Latin by master doctor haddon, in the greate sweate, 1551 ; and translated by master arthur golding. [Harl. MS. 425, leaves 73, 74. Printed by F. J. Furnivall in *Ballads from Manuscripts*, The Ballad Society, vol. I., pp. 321-330, 1871. There is no evidence as to the date of the translation, but the forced rhymes and awkward metre suggest that it must have been an early work.]

31. A Godly and Fruteful Prayer, with an Epistle to ..... John [Aylmer] bishop of London, from the Latin of Abraham Fleming. [London, n. d.]

The Benefit that Christians receyue by Iesus Christ & him Crucified. Translated out of French into English by A. G., London, 8 vo., 1573 and n. d. [Hunter and Cooper ascribe this work to Golding ; Mr. Lee is sceptical. The initials A. G. frequently stand on the title-pages of the works of Anthony Gilby, also a translator of Beza and Calvin. He is the author of "Calvin's Commentary on Daniel," London, 1570, and 'The Testamentes of the Twelue Patriarches,' from the Latin of Robert Grosseteste, London, 1581 ; both of these works are credited to Golding by Cooper (Lowndes agrees regarding the first), but are rejected by Mr. Lee.]

'An Abridgment of the Chronicle of Sir John Frossard Chanon of ..... written in Latin by John Sleydane ' is in the Harl. MS. 357, art. 5, and is attributed to Arthur Golding, but when it was printed in 1608 the translator's name was given as P. or Per. (Percival) Golding.

To the above list Hunter adds 'Cosan Commentaries, 1565. Martin 4367. An edit. 1590. Farmer 5860. Dedicated to Sir William Cecil from Powles Belchamp. 12 Oct., 1565,' but this is surely an inaccurate reference to the edition of Cæsar's *Commentaries*, published in that year. Hunter says further that "he also published a translation of Quintus Curtius according to Low in his *Ath. Cant.*"

Whether Arthur Golding was related to the family of the same name which came into prominence during the reign of Charles I. I have not been able to discover. Sir Edward Golding was created a baronet on September 27, 1642, and his son, Sir Charles, died on September 28, 1667, *aet.* 37. Sir Charles Golding's son, Sir Edward, died on December 6, 1715.[1] A "Mr. Golding," the grandfather of the first Sir Edward, was steward to Sir Thomas Ritson, but I have not been able to connect him with the Essex family. Hunter notes that among the Harleian MSS. is a history of the house of Vere, by a Percival Golding. The arms of Golding of Postlingford, and of Fornham, both in Suffolk, are—Gules, a chevron Or between three bezants.[2]

THE ABRAHAM SACRIFIANT OF BEZA

Abraham Sacrifiant, otherwise known as *Le Sacrifice d'Abraham*, is the only play written by Théodore de Bèze. It was first printed at Geneva by Conrad Badius in 1550, and Beza's Address to the Readers is dated at Lausanne on October 1st of that year, but Pasquier in *Recherches sur la France* (1560 on) says definitely that it was written for the accession of Henry II., i. e., in 1547. If this statement is correct (though it is highly improbable that Beza would have chosen such a subject before his conversion in 1549) it is barely possible, as M. Émile Faguet believes, that the author worked over the material before 1550, and that he then added the strongly Calvinistic traits which characterize the play.[3] In a letter

1 V. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1795, vol. i, p. 284.

2 V. *Notes and Queries*, Series I, vol. xi, p. 13.

3 V. *La Tragédie française au xvi. Siècle*, p. 94. But Badius declared that Beza wrote the play as an expiation of his sin in having written the *Juvenilia*!

written by him, in 1598, to Jean Jacomot, who translated the drama into Latin, he says that it had been played by the students at the Academy of Lausanne, and also that it had been played in France "avec un grand applaudissement." The piece, indeed, had a phenomenal success; during the sixteenth century ten editions appeared, and thirteen more were published during the seventeenth century.[1] Before the year 1600 it had been twice translated into Latin, once into Italian and once into English—by Arthur Golding. Its popularity, due in large measure, no doubt, to its sectarian character, was not undeserved on purely literary grounds. Pasquier tells us that it "lui fit tomber les larmes des yeux,"[2] and in our own day Petit de Julleville has declared that "il y a de vraies beautés dans cette pièce." M. Émile Faguet has referred to it as "peutêtre la première tragédie française où il y ait trace de vrai talent," and again: "L'œuvre est forte, bien conduite et touchante. Surtout elle est vraie. De Bèze est un moraliste. Il est descendu dans le cœur humain avec une lanterne, comme dit Mme. de Sévigné, et il y a trouvé ce dont nous faisons si grand cas, la tragédie psychologique."[4]

It is almost unnecessary to say that the subject had been treated in the French *mystères* before Beza turned his attention to it. In the famous cycle known as *Le Mistère du Viel Testament* the story holds a prominent place in the A, B and C versions, and three more or less modified versions of the cycle play were published during the first half of the sixteenth century. All six texts are collated by Rothschild in his edition of *Le Viel Testament* published by the Société des Anciens Textes Français; the three detached versions are denoted by the letters D, E and F. Of these, D, which dates

1 For a bibliography of the various editions and translations of *Abraham Sacrifiant* V. *Le Mistère du Viel Testament*, vol. ii, pp. xlix-lxii. This list, however, omits the second edition—*Le Sacrifice d'Abraham, tragédie françoise séparée en trois pauses à la façon des actes de comédies, avec des choeurs, un prologue et un epilogue.* Paris, H. Estienne, 1552 in-8. V. Dr. Heinrich Heppe's *Theodor Beza* in Hagenbach's *Leben und Ausgewählte Schriften der Väter und Begründer der reformirten Kirche*, vi. Theil, p. 370.

2 *Recherches*, vii, p. 615.

3 *Histoire du Théâtre*, p. 84.

4 *Op. cit.*, p. 98. For a different opinion V. Introduction to *Le Mistère du Viel Testament*, vol. ii, p. ix+.

from about 1520, shows only slight divergences from A, B and C ; E and F, both of which were printed in 1539, and which had been played by the Confrères de la Passion, follow the earlier copies closely in many places, but there are frequent omissions and very important additions. The latter are chiefly of two kinds. In the first place the pastoral scenes of the cycle play are very much elaborated, and Abraham's servants Eliezer and Ismael are transformed into Sicilian shepherds, or more properly speaking, self-conscious poets masquerading in shepherds' guise. They declare their deep love of nature :

"Il n'est en ce monde plaisance
Telle que estre aux boys et aux champs
Et ouyr des oyseaulx les chantz,
Qui font leurs nidz et leurs logettes,
Decouppans mille chansonnettes,
Telles que nature les duict."

They banter with each other as do the shepherds of Theocritus :

Eliezer

" Or sus ! doncques commenceray je.

Ismael

Ouy et tenez le bas ton
Ou vous aurez de ce baston.

Ilz chantent."

Like the shepherds of Theocritus, too, they boast of their musical accomplishments :

" Si j'avoye ma chalemie
Ma viole ou ma cornemuse,
Il n'y a ne harpe ne muse
Qui vous peussent tant rejouyr."

In turn the shepherds sing the praises of pastoral life, one taking up the theme and continuing the strain when the other concludes and Isaac joining them in a chorus. In these pastoral scenes the Confrères de la Passion were not imitating

the Greek idyllists directly ; they were imitating or even taking over almost literally the work of French poets who flourished toward the end of the fifteenth century—Guillaume Alexis, Guillaume Crétin and Martial de Paris dit d'Auvergne.[1]

In addition to this pastoral development the E and F versions of the Abraham and Isaac story are characterized by a great elaboration of the soliloquies of Abraham, and of the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac after they have arrived at the place of sacrifice. After learning from Raphael what God has commanded him to do, Abraham reviews in his mind each phrase of the angel's message and of the promise which God had previously made to him concerning Isaac, and concludes :

" O altitude de science,
O richesse de sapience,
Combien tes faicts et jugemens
Sont aux humains entendemens
Obscurs et incomprehensibles." (ll. 430-435)

On arriving at the mount he meditates at length on the unnatural conflict which is taking place within him :

" De nature, qui se combat
Contre Raison."

and in a similar strain he reminds Isaac that

" Je porte le feu en ma main,
Qui est sensible et naturel,
Mais ung feu supernaturel
Brusle et ard dedans ma pensée."

Then ensues a long scene (ll. 964-1155) full of fine-drawn distinctions, in which Isaac tries to persuade his father that he is about to do wrong, and that he will regret his deed when it is too late :

" Vous aurez regret a oultrance
Et grant remors de conscience
D'auoir faict sacrifice tel
De Isaac, vostre filz et substance."

[1] V. Rothschild, *op. cit.*, pp. vi and lxiii.

Abraham discusses the difficulty of the part which each must play

" active
Quant a moy, quant a toy passive."

Isaac's speeches have a hardly less scholastic flavour. He speaks of

" Dieu, qui est mon pére eternel,
Et vous, mon pére naturel."

He finally submits

" Nonobstant qu'il semble a nature
Que vray pére se denature
Et que ce luy soit amer si."

It is in the E and F versions of 1539 that we find the original of Beza's play. The two texts differ only slightly and in unimportant details; in F only, however, do we find the concluding speech of the angel (as in Beza's play) in which the promise is given to Abraham that his seed shall increase in number like to the stars of the heavens and the sand of the sea, that they shall possess the gates of their enemies, and that from him shall one be born in whom all nations shall be blessed. In all the other versions Abraham and Isaac rejoin their servants immediately after sacrificing the lamb. The lyrical element introduced into E and F in the pastoral scenes has its counterpart in the *Abraham Sacrifiant* in the song of Abraham and Sara and the Songs of the Shepherds, although the subject matter of the lyrics is changed entirely. Moreover there are some verbal similarities between E and F on the one hand and Beza's play on the other, as we shall see shortly.

Beza's play, then, follows E and F more closely than A, B, and C, and in one detail it follows F more closely than E. Only occasionally, however, is there any close correspondence between passages or scenes, and Beza's omissions and additions are numerous and of a fundamental kind. The chief omissions are as follows: Of the *dramatis personae* Dieu, Misericorde and Justice are omitted altogether, and consequently all the scenes which are laid in heaven. Ceraphin is replaced by Raphael. The place of Eliezer and Ismael is

taken in Beza's play by two ' demie troupes ' of shepherds. The scenes in which Abraham, Sara and Isaac are characters previous to the departure for the Mount of Vision are very much shortened, and those in which Isaac and the shepherds play games and engage in a singing match are replaced by a short scene in which a staid conversation precedes the songs of the shepherds, here divested of their pastoral character. Abraham's soliloquy of 158 lines after the departure of the angel, and the succeeding pastoral scene are also omitted. Another soliloquy of Abraham's (134 lines) and the scene of some 200 lines already referred to in which Abraham and Isaac give expression to many subtle unnatural considerations have left no trace in Beza's play. Moreover the latter concludes with the announcement of the angel in which the promise is given to Abraham ; in all the older versions Abraham sacrifices the lamb, and returns with Isaac to the shepherds who cannot understand their long delay ; the whole party then sets out for home, and finally the story is related to Sara.

The additions which Beza has made to the older play are not less notable. In the first place there is a prologue in which it is explained that the audience are not in Lausanne, but in the land of the Philistines, where they will see Abraham, Isaac and Sara. Let each one keep silence and listen attentively. Abraham and Sara each in a soliloquy praise God's goodness, and then sing together a ' cantique ' of praise in which they review their lives. The next character to be introduced is Satan in the habit of a monk. In a long soliloquy he compares his kingdom to God's, rejoices in the effectiveness of his frock as a disguise, and announces his intention of undermining the goodness of Abraham. Then follows, as in the older versions, the command of the angel to Abraham that he sacrifice Isaac. Abraham submits at once though he is horrified. A company of shepherds comes forth, and Isaac asks that they take him with them. His extreme youth is here emphasized by the insistence of the shepherds that he first get his parents' permission, and their assurance that he will be allowed to go when " vous serez grand." It is unnecessary to

point out how unlike he is to the philosophic youth of the E and F versions. While Isaac goes to gain his father's consent the shepherds sing a 'cantique' of 78 lines, lauding the happiness of him who trusts in God, and illustrating this truth by the events of Abraham's life. Sara now objects strongly to Isaac's accompanying his father to do sacrifice ; the parting scene is very effective and contains a touch of dramatic forecasting when Sara says :

> " Las ! je ne sais quand ce sera
> Que revoir je vous pourrai tous,
> Le Seigneur soit avec vous."

In the older plays Sara urges Abraham to take Isaac with him :

> " Mon amy, menés vostre enfant
> Et la façon luy denottez
> Du sacrifice."

They set out and Satan (*solus*) expresses his rage at Abraham's intended obedience. This brings us to the first 'Pause.' When they arrive at the foot of the hill Abraham bids the shepherds wait. They discuss among themselves the reason of their master's evident depression and then sing a 'cantique,' of 74 lines on the instability of all earthly things,—a song which has retained something of the pastoral atmosphere. Then they withdraw separately to pray. The parting words of Abraham to the shepherds are similar to those of the E and F versions, though the latter contain no analogues to the succeeding song and Abraham's withdrawal for prayer. After the second 'Pause' follows the scene between Abraham and Isaac on the mount. Abraham avoids his son's questions, and turns aside to pray ; Isaac builds the altar—and then follows his father's example. We are reminded that Beza has not adhered closely to the unities of time and place when, in the next scene, we have a soliloquy by Sara whom we left three days ago. We then return at once to Abraham who is wrestling with God in prayer ; as he is now strong, now weak, Satan tempts him or laments his lack of success. At

length Abraham, having determined to do God's bidding, tells Isaac the truth. The scene is wonderfully effective. The mutual love of father and child and the anguish of each are described in simple, moving language, unmarred by extraneous matter, or over-elaboration. Even Satan is moved to pity, and he finally takes his flight when he finds that Isaac is a willing victim. As Abraham is about to strike the blow the angel bids him put up his sword and points out the ram ; then in a second speech he announces the promise of God. An epilogue points out the blessings of obedience.

As compared to the older French versions *Abraham Sacrifiant* moves much more rapidly and is much more skilfully constructed, the omissions having generally tended to free the narrative from undramatic details or digressions. Beza's Calvinism of course explains his leaving out the scenes in which God is a character, and also the conversion of the shepherd songs, which extol the joy of living and the beauty of the earth, into songs of praise to God. The introduction of Satan and the addition of the song of Abraham and Sara are due to the same cause.

The passages in which we find close verbal similarities between Beza's play and the E and F versions are not numerous. The following are cited because they show a correspondence between E and F and *Abraham Sacrifiant*, where there is no such correspondence between Beza's play and A, B and C :

E and *F*.

Raphael.

Abraham, Abraham !

Abraham.

Seigneur,
Voicy ton humble serviteur
Prest a t'obeyr en tout lieu.

Raphael.

. . . . . .
Prens Isaac, ton fils unicque,
Ton bien aymé . . . . . .
Puis yras par devotion
En la terre de Vision

Et au hault d'une des montaignes,
Ou je te donneray enseignes
. . . . . .
D'icelluy feras sacrifice

Abraham Sacrifiant.

L'Ange.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Seigneur.
Me voicy.

L'Ange.

Ton fils bien-aimé
Ton fils vnique Isaac nommé,
Par toy soit mené iusqu' au lieu
Surnommé la Myrrhe de Dieu :
Là deuant moy tu l'offriras,
Et tout entier le brusleras
Au mont que ie te monstreray.

E and *F*.

Icy nous fault faire sejour.
Vecy ja le troysième jour
Que de noz quartiers et partis
Nous sommes ensemble partis
Et tant avons faict, la Dieu grace
Que je voy le lieu et la place
Ouquel mon filz et moy yrons
Et le sacrifice offrirons
A Dieu. Vous troys nous attendrez,
Gardans l'asne et cy vous tiendrez
Tant que d'enhault nous reviendrons.

Abraham Sacrifiant.

Enfans, voicy arriué le tiers iour,
Que nous marchons sans auoir fait seiour
Que bien petit : reposer il vous faut :
Car quant à moy, ie veux monter plus haut,
Auec Isaac, iusqu'en un certain lieu,
Qui m'a esté enseigné de mon Dieu,
Là je feray sacrifice & priere,
Comme il requiert : demourez donc arrière,

Et vous gardez de marcher plus auant.
. . . . . .
Bien tost serons de retour, si Dieu plaist

E and *F*.

A nostre faict, bien j'apperçoys
Que portons le feu et le boys,
Mais ou est l'aigneau ou victime,
Qui sont requis, comme j'estime,
Pour sacrifier ?

Abraham Sacrifiant.

Voila du bois, du feu & vn cousteau,
Mais ie ne voy ne mouton ny agneau,
Que vous puissiez sacrifier icy.

Cf. also the following passage which occurs in F only with the final speech of the angel in Beza's play. (V. Appendix).

Entens
Ce que Dieu te mande par moy.
. . . . . pourtant
Qu'a luy tu as obey tant
Et que tu n'as point pardonné
Au seul filz qu'il t'avoit donné,
Il a faict solennel serment
Par luy mesmes et jurement
Que dessus toute nation
Tu auras benediction
Du hault trosne celestiel :
Et comme estoilles sont au ciel
Et gravier au port de la mer,
Sans nombrer et sans estimer,
Ainsi sera il, sans doubtance,
De ton germe et de ta semence,
Qui les portes possedera
De tous ennemys qu'il aura ;
Et en ta generation
Toute et chascune nation
Qui sur la terre marchera
A jamais benoiste sera
De Dieu, le souverain seigneur.

The close verbal similarities in the above passages are not numerous, but the ideas correspond closely, whereas in A, B and C there are either no corresponding passages or the similarity is far slighter. Other examples might be cited. Abraham's fear that Sara will not believe his explanation of Isaac's death, and that she will impute to him some sinister motive, is found in E and F only. Isaac's prayer in which he begs forgiveness of his sins and that God will comfort his mother occurs in A, B and C as well as in E and F. A noteworthy correspondence between Beza's play and E and F is found in Abraham's long meditation (E F lines 340-499) the substance of which is very similar to Abraham's reflections on the mount in Beza's play. In both plays Abraham is swayed by considerations which are advanced in the ensuing order, except that in Beza's play (5) precedes (3) ; the change was made, no doubt, in the interest of logical and artistic effectiveness, and because it emphasized the strongly Calvinistic conclusion.

(1) It is difficult to reconcile God's promises regarding the future of the race in Isaac, with the present situation.

(2) What is impossible to man's intelligence is possible to God.

(3) God can raise Isaac from the dead if that be necessary.

(4) Abraham pleads the weakness of natural affection, but resolves to banish it.

(5) After all Isaac is but lent to his father by God.

A, B and C give expression only to the last of these considerations.

Beza's play seems to me to be by far the most effective of the extant treatments of the Abraham and Isaac story, with the possible exception of the short Chester play—undoubtedly the most remarkable achievement of the old English drama. In the *Abraham Sacrifiant* we recognize at once the work of a skilled literary craftsman. M. Faguet credits Beza with " l'intention de créer un drame à la fois chrétien et classique, qui soit inspiré de l'esprit religieux des anciens mystères, et qui s'accommode aux formes de la tragédie telle qu'on commence à l'entendre."[1] This is an exact description of

[1] *Op cit.*, p. 93.

the *Abraham Sacrifiant*, though we cannot agree with M. Faguet that it shows " la rigoureuse unité des tragédies proprement classiques " for, as we have seen, there is an interval of three days between the early and the later scenes, and at least two widely separated places are represented. The ' cantiques ' which are in themselves very beautiful, are not closely related to the action, but they occur before the dramatic tension has become acute. The language of the *dénouement* is especially convincing. Abraham in his fierce determination to do the will of God is a type of the sterner Calvinists, though his character is softened and made much more interesting by his deep natural affection for his son. The struggle that goes on in his soul engages the sympathy of the reader entirely, and is infinitely more effective than the long monologues of the older plays. This result is brought about by the introduction of Satan, a character of whose presence none of the other *dramatis personae* are conscious, but who serves a double function—that of dramatically representing in his speeches the struggle of Abraham's weaker human nature against the commandment of God, and of engaging our sympathies effectively on the side of duty. The moral significance of temptation, when the worst is made to seem the better reason, is in this way vividly suggested, and the effect is very powerful. As far as I am aware the function of the devil in this play is original with Beza. In the English moralities " the office of the devil ..... is on the whole, limited to one thing, namely, that of giving their agents, the vices, their hellish commissions."[1] In *Mankind* the devil, Tytivullus, whispers his evil suggestions in the ear of mankind—a situation paralleled in some other English plays,—but nowhere do we find the devil playing a rôle so artistically conceived as is that of the *Abraham Sacrifiant*. The similiarity of some of the speeches of the devil in *The Disobedient Child* to those of Satan in Beza's play, with with which it is almost exactly contemporary, is perhaps worthy of note. Compare for example the following lines :

1 Cushman, *The Devil and the Vice*, Halle, 1900, p. 51.

" And though that God on high have his dominion,
And ruleth the world everywhere,
Yet by your leave I have a portion
Of this same earth that standeth here.
The Kingdom of God is above in heaven,
And mine is, I tell you, beneath in hell."[1]

with Satan's first speech in *Abraham Sacrifiant* (ll. 147-223).

That Beza's play "s'accommode aux formes de la tragédie telle qu' on commence à l'entendre " is seen in several particulars. In the first place the perfect unity of the action if we except the three rather long ' cantiques ' is in marked contrast to the ordinary mystery play, in which the Bible stories are narrated without any rigorous selection or rejection of details. The fact that Beza has " separated the prologue, and diuided the whole into pawses, after the maner of actes in comedies " also points definitely to the models of ancient literature which the author had in mind. The stichic verse (ll. 395-411) and the presence of the ' demie troupes ' of shepherds, partly fulfilling as they do the function of a chorus, are also traits derived directly from Greek drama.

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC STORY

The story of Abraham and Isaac is treated in each of the four extant cycles of English mysteries—those of York, Towneley, Chester and Coventry. Besides these there are the East Anglia Brome play and one which is preserved in a Trinity College, Dublin, MS.; neither of these is known to have formed part of a cycle.[2] Many other versions are lost, for we know of plays on this subject having been performed at

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[1] Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, ed. Hazlitt, vol. ii, p. 310.

[2] In the British Museum (11777.f.25) is a play—*The Trial of Abraham—a Dramatic Poem*—written by "Mr. Farrer of Dundle" and printed at Stanford by Newcomb and Peat in 1790. The characters are Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Chorus, and Semichorus, and the play, except the choral songs, is in blank verse. The author confesses his "obligation to a morsel of pathetic eloquence intitled "The Soliloquy of Abraham" as it appears in some miscellaneous collections, and is attributed to Sir Henry Wotton. To other Writers on the subject, whether in an Epic or a Dramatic form, he is not indebted." The book contains 68 pages.

Newcastle, Beverley and Dublin ; an Abraham and Isaac play was also given at St. Dunstans, Canterbury, in 1491. It would seem probable that the subject was a popular one in the old religious drama, for it contained possibilities for tragedy almost unequalled by any other Bible story. The relation of the various extant versions of the play to each other we shall consider briefly. In the following pages I shall refer to the York play as Y., to the Towneley play as T., to the Chester play as Ch., to the Coventry play as C., to the Dublin play as D., and to the Brome play as B. The French plays will be referred to by the letters A, B, C, E and F, as in the preceding chapter.

Chester and Brome.—When Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith first published the Brome play (*Anglia*, vol. VII., 1884) she pointed out that the corresponding play in the Chester cycle contained "several resemblances to the Brome manuscript," some of which she indicated.[1] In *Modern Language Notes* for April 1890, Professor Hohlfeld showed that the parallels between the two plays were much closer and more numerous than Miss Smith had suggested. He explained the relation between the two plays as follows : "The play on Abraham's Sacrifice in the Brome MS. is the corrupt form of an older version, not necessarily earlier than the beginning of the fourteenth century. This latter has been used, in its chief portion(lines 114-314), as the model for the corresponding part of the fourth play in the Chester collection."[2] Professor Hohlfeld's argument is plausible, and may be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of the close correspondence between many passages in the two plays. Even his long list of parallels is hardly exhaustive. Cf. the following additions :

B. A ! Lord of heuyn, my handes I wryng. (l. 120)
Ch. For sorowe I maie my handes wringe. (l. 323)

B. For my hart was neuer halffe so sore (l. 160)
Ch. Thy wordes makes my harte full sore (l. 342)

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1 *Anglia*, vol. vii, p. 320.
2 *Modern Language Notes*, vol. v, p. 119.

Moreover the statement that " their final parts are entirely different, at least from the moment when the angel appears to release Abraham from the Lord's commandment (Ch. 73 20 and B. l. 314)," although true in a general way, is hardly accurate, for I have discovered one or two similarities after this point. Cf. the following :

B. He standyth teyed, loo ! a-mong the breres (l. 324)
Ch. Amonge the breyers tyed is he (l. 442)

B. Off yow schall cume frowte gret [won]
And euer be in blysse with-owt ynd. (ll. 398-399)

Ch. Blessed euer more shall thou be,
Through frute that shall come of thee. (ll. 458-459)

York and Towneley.—It has long been known that in many respects certain of the plays of the York and Towneley cycles show a marked resemblance to each other.[1] In the respective versions of the Abraham and Isaac story these resemblances are not numerous, but they are unmistakeable. The *dramatis personae* of Y. are Abraham, Isaac, Angelus, Primus Famulus, Secundus Famulus; to these characters T. adds that of Deus. In Y., however, Isaac is " of eelde ..... Thyrty yere and more sum dele," and he does not refer to his mother, whereas in T. he is a child, afraid of the sword and appealing to Abraham to spare him for love of his mother. I have noted the following similarities : In both plays Abraham is one hundred years old (Y. l. 5, T. l. 38). In both plays Abraham suggests to Isaac that they will return safely :

Y. I praye god send vs wele agayne (l. 108)
T. We shal com home with grete lovyng. (l. 142)

Cf. the speech of the first servant in each play as Abraham and Isaac leave them :

Y. Att youre biddyng we wille be bowne (l. 113)
T. we ar redy youre bydyng to fulfill. (l. 152)

1 V. Hohlfeld, *Die altenglischen Kollektivmisterien.* (Anglia vol. xi, pp. 219-311.)

In both plays Abraham says that he would gladly die for his son (Y. 241, T. 220). Cf.

Y. Childir, bide ye here still. (l. 145)
T. Ye two here with this asse abide (l. 145).

Elsewhere Abraham addresses the servants as " childre " (T. 157).

Y. Sertis, sone, I may no lengar layne. (l. 187)
T. Now, son, I may no longer layn. (l. 169)

God is called " Adonay " in Y. (l. 263) and T. (ll. 1 and 46) ; in no other play is this name used.

Y. That all this worlde has worthely wrought (l. 264)
T. long syn he this warld has wroght. (l. 10)

Y. Thy wordis makis me my wangges to wete. (l. 275)
T. .... water shotis in both myn eeyn. (l. 216)

In no other play does Abraham refer to himself as weeping.

Towneley and Brome or Chester.—In certain respects T. is closer to B. or Ch. than to Y. The characters are the same except that in B. and Ch. the servants are omitted, and that in Ch. a second angel is added. In B. as in T., God (in heaven) announces that he will try Abraham's faith. In all three plays Isaac is a child and speaks of his mother ; in all three he is horrified on learning that he is to die, suggests that if he has trespassed he should be beaten, and fears the sword in Abraham's hand. In all three Isaac's face is turned down that he may not see the blow. In B. and T. Abraham kisses Isaac after all danger is past. The following passages may be compared, some of which are noteworthy chiefly because they occur in the same connection :

T. Isaac, son, wher art thou ?
All redy, fader, Lo me here. (ll. 92-3)

B. Ysaac, my owyne son dere,
Wer art thou, chyld ? Speke to me.
My fayer swet fader, I am here. (ll. 101-4)

T. I am redy to do this dede,
And euer to fulfill youre bydyng (ll. 139-141)
B. I am full fayn to do yowr bedyng. (l. 119)
C. Father, I am all readye
To doe your byddinge moste mekelye. (ll. 237-9)

T. My dere son, look thou haue no drede,
We shal com home with grete louyng. (ll. 141-143)
B. Dred the nowyth, my chyld, I the red etc. (l. 143)
C. Dreede thee not, my childe, I reade etc. (l. 269)

T. Bi this thyng be broght to end. (l. 164)
C. For we must doe a littill thinge. (l. 230)
The word ' thing ' seems to be used in a technical sense.

T. Syn I haue trespast I wold be bet.(l. 185)
B. Yff I haue trespassyd a-yens yow owt,
With a yard ye may make me full myld. (ll. 169-171)
C. Yf I have treasspasede in anye degree,
With a yarde you maye beate me. (ll. 289-291)

T. God sir, put vp youre sword agayn (l. 283)
B. Ya ! but I woold that sword wer in a gled. (l. 381)

The fact that the last two leaves of the T. MS. are wanting, makes impossible a comparison of the conclusions.

Coventry.—The play is short, and as in Y., the characterization is slight and the whole effect non-dramatic, although in the early part of the play the relation of father and child suggests the B. and Ch. plays; the scenes are lacking, however, in the little realistic touches which make B. and Ch. so effective. In both C. and Y. Abraham makes but little objection to the command of the angel, and in both Isaac makes no objection whatever when his father tells him that he is to die. C. contains only one passage which is strikingly similar to Y., viz :

C. Almighty God thus the wylle mede
ffor that good wylle that thou ast done. (56 13, 14)
Y. God sais thou sall haue mekill mede
For thys goode will that thou in ware (ll. 335-337)

An apparent similarity to T. is probably not significant :

C. With yow to walk ouyr dale and hille (52 19)
T. Bi hillys and dayllys, both vp & downe. (l. 135)

To B. and Ch. there are also certain similarities. As in B. the play opens with Abraham's expressing his special love for Isaac, and his praying for God's blessing : in both plays he then addresses Isaac affectionately, who replies in a similar way. Cf.

C. Thu art my suete childe, and par amoure
ffull wele in herte do I the love. (50 13. 14)
B. Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best etc. (l. 31)

In C. as in Ch. and B., Isaac notices his father's "hevy cher" and twice inquires as to the cause. Abraham covers Isaac's face with a "Kerchere" as in B., C. and Y. The first words of Abraham after the angel has prevented his slaying Isaac are similar in C. and B.

C. I thank my God in heuyn above,
And hym honowre for this grett grace. (55 9, 10)
B. A ! Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace. (l. 333)

The concluding promise of the angel is similar to that in B., Ch., D. and Y. They then go home into their own country as in B., Y. and D.

Dublin.—D. differs from all the other English plays in that Sara is a character. The other *dramatis personae* are Abraham, Isaac, Deus and Angelus : Abraham addresses his servants but they do not speak. As Brotanek has pointed out D. is ✓ much more closely related to the French plays of the *Vieil Testament* than is any other English play. Isaac is a child, and much is made of his affection for his mother ; in the elaboration of small, realistic, dramatic detail the play resembles the Brome version. Abraham's first speech in each play is similar: ✓

D. O gret god on hye that al the worlde madest,
And lendist vs oure leving here to do thi plesaunce,
. . . . . .
to the be honoure, ...
and hily, lord, I thank the.
B. Fader of heuyn omnipotent,

Thow hast yoffe me both lond and rent,
And my lyvelod thow hast me sent ;
I thanke the heyly euer-more of all.

Cf. also

D. the goode lord of al heuenes hye,
comaundeth the to take and sacrifye
Isaac thi son that thou louest so hertlye (ll. 56-59)
B. Owr Lord comandyth the for to take
Ysaac, thy yowng sone that thow lovyst best
And with hys blod sacryfyce that thow make.
(ll. 60-63)

The Ch. version is similar. As in B., Ch. and T. Isaac thinks his death is to be a punishment for his having " trespassed " and begs for mercy. Abraham's words, " thi modre may not haue hir wille all way" (l. 198) suggest the corresponding passage in Ch.,—" Thy mother I can not please." (l. 324). In D. (l. 221), Ch. (l. 40), and C. (54 16), there is a reference to smiting off Isaac's head.

Brotanek pointed out certain verbal similarities between D. and Y. and T., which indicate an unmistakeable relationship. I have noted the following passages :

D. Abraham, fearing the effect of Isaac's death upon Sara, resolves to " se how preuely that I can it do " (ll. 82-84) ; in Y., Abraham decides that " to my sone I will noght saye." (l. 93).

D. and I charge you that ye abide here in deede,
and that ye remeve not from this stede. (ll. 141-143)
T. Sir, we shal abide you here,
Oute of this stede shall we not go. (ll. 155-157)
Y. Childir, bide ye here still ;
No ferther sall ye goo. (ll. 145-147)

D. A, son, I haue aspyed the place. (l. 157)
T. Lo, my son, here is the place. (l. 165)

D. Come on, son, a right goode pace. (l. 159)
T. we must go a full good paase. (l. 161)

D. Now Isaac, son, I may no lengre refrayne. (l. 161)
T. Now, son, I may no longer layn. (l. 169)
Y. Sertis, sone, I may no lengar layne. (l. 187)

D. lay downe that wode on that auter there. (l. 169)
Y. Lay doune that woode euen here,
Tille oure auter be grathide. (ll. 158-160)

D. Yif I haue trespast, I cry you mercy. (l. 173)
T. syn I haue trespast I wold be bet. (l. 186)
Y. That I haue trespassed or oght mysdone,
For-giffe me fadir. (ll. 256-258)

D. Haue I displesid you any thing ? (l. 172)
D. Nay, son, to me thou hast do no trespas. (l. 177)
T. what haue I done ? truly, none ill. (l. 189)
T. What haue I done, fader, what haue I saide ?
Truly no kyns ill to me. (ll. 205-207)

D. then, fader, bynde myne handes and my legges fast,
and yeue me a gret stroke, that my peynes were past.
(ll 225-227)
Y. Ther-fore lye downe, hande and feete. (l. 277)
Now fadir be noght myssyng,
But smyte fast as ye may. (ll. 293-295)

D. and seid, oure lord alowed my wylle (l. 342)
T. Thi good will com I to alow. (l. 259)
Y. To lowe that lorde I halde grete skyll (l. 322)

The expressions " in fay " (D. 199) and " ma fa " (T. 39), " ma fay " (T. 128) occur in none other of the English plays.

THE RELATION OF *LE VIEL TESTAMENT* PLAYS TO ENGLISH VERSIONS

The French versions of the Abraham and Isaac story are not closely related to any of the English plays except D— the only English play in which Sara is a character. Brotanek has pointed out the similarities between the V. T. and D. in his edition of the latter play printed in *Anglia*, vol. 21. Some of the parallel passages which he adduces are not very convincing, but after all possible deductions have been made a sufficient

number remains to establish beyond controversy the relationship. Without attempting to sift the evidence brought forward by Brotanek I shall merely notice briefly those points in the French plays to which there are correspondences in the English versions of the story.

In V. T. God (in heaven) resolves that he will test Abraham's faith ; so in D. B. and T. : he commands his angel to bid Abraham sacrifice Isaac ; so in D. and B. Abraham is troubled regarding Sara ; so in D. in V. T., however, she makes no objection to Isaac's accompanying his father ; in D. she tries to persuade Abraham to leave Isaac at home. In E. F. (ll. 391+) Abraham meditates on the promise which God has made that Isaac's descendants shall be in number like the sands of the sea and the stars of the sky ; so in Y. but the passage occurs before Abraham has learned that he is to sacrifice his son. Isaac cries out against his father's intention to slay him as in D. T., B. and Ch. He suggests that his eyes be covered in order that he may not see the sword ; so in Ch., B. and Y. ; in T. he fears the sword but does not ask that his eyes he covered ; in C. Abraham covers his son's face in order that he may not see his " lovely vesage." Abraham suggests to Isaac that he bind him as in B. and Ch.; in D. Isaac makes the proposal, as also in Y. In E. F. Isaac asks his father to use his girdle in binding him, and also that Abraham take away his hat and neck-scarf ; similar detail is introduced in Ch. where Isaac asks his father to take away his clothes in order that no blood be shed on them, and in D. where Isaac requests him to take off his gown and ungird him, and where he also asks that his mother be not allowed to see his clothes. Abraham kisses his son as in B., Ch., D., C. and Y.; in A, B, C and B. he kisses him a second time. Abraham feels physical repulsion to the deed—" Tout le sang de mon coeur s'emeult "; cf. " My blode aborreth to se my son blede, for all on blode it is " (D. ll. 243-245), and " My hart begynnyth stronly to rysse, To see the blood off thy blyssyd body " (B. ll. 208-210), and " A ! Lord, my hart reysyth ther-agayn " (B. l. 299). Isaac thinks of his mother as in B., Ch. and D.; in F. and T. Abraham is concerned as to how he is to tell her, for he knows that she will

detect any subterfuge. Isaac asks whether a beast may not be substituted as the victim; so in D. In E. F. Abraham reflects that Isaac might have died in battle or have met some other terrible fate ; so in D. After all danger is past Abraham kisses Isaac as in B. and T. In F. the angel gives to Abraham the long promise, in language similar to that used in D., B., Ch., C. and Y. Abraham and Isaac return to their servants and set out for home as in D., Y. and B. The concluding scene in which Sara is a character is similar to the D. version, one or two passages resembling each other closely *e. g.*

V. T. Or soit le puissant Dieu loué (l. 10591)
D. Now blessid be that lorde souereigne (l. 359).

Summary.—Of the English plays which deal with the Abraham and Isaac story only Ch. and B. are intimately related to each other, but none of them occupies a position of complete isolation. T. and C. are more closely related to Y. than to any other play, but in certain respects they are closer to B. and Ch. than to Y. D. contains many lines similar to corresponding lines in Y. and T., but in its general spirit and in two or three passages it holds more closely to B. Whatever be the explanation of these facts it is clear that the mystery plays of the various districts of the Midland and Northern counties were not unknown in other parts of the same counties. None of these plays except D. shows a very close resemblance to the plays of the *Vieil Testament* ; some slight similarities in details which are not to be found in the Vulgate, however, make it difficult to consider the French and English cycles as entirely independent of each other.

It is not impossible, indeed, that the mystery plays of the different European countries were more closely related than has ever been supposed. At any rate it is difficult to explain the fact that ideas and incidents are common to versions of different countries, which, are not found in the account given in Genesis, and which, if they have developed naturally from the dramatic treatment of the subject, are at least very striking. Compare, for instance, the following extracts from Feo Belcari's *Rappresentazione e Festa d'Abraam e d'Isac suo*

Figliuolo (first edition, Florence, 4°, without date ; second edition 1485). Abraham is lying on a bed when the angel brings to him the command of God—as in *Le Viel Testament* He warns Isaac not to let Sara know that they are going, and issues a similar injunction to the two servants : Cf. D., Y. and T. He orders the servants also to prepare whatever will be necessary for a six days' journey—as in Beza's play. A striking resemblance to Beza's play occurs " dipoi cominciano a edificare un altare in sul monte " when we return to Sara, who complains to her household regarding the pain she endures in the absence of Abraham and Isaac. Referring to his mother Isaac says :

" Se fussi a questo loco io non morrei,
Con tanti voti, preghi ed umilitade
Pregheresti il Signor, ch'io camperei."

Cf. the following lines from Ch.:

" Woulde God my mother were here with me !
Shee woulde kneele downe upon her knee,
Prainge you, father, if yt may be,
For to save my liffe."

Abraham tells Isaac that God will raise him from the dead rather than fail in his promise, and also reflects :

" Tu non morrai di lunga malattia,
Nè divorato da fiera crudele."

Compare the following lines from E and F:

" ..... tu ne dois partir du monde
Par quelque maladie immunde,
Par guerre ou quelque aultre fortune."

And both versions continue to compare with this Isaac's being offered up by the hand of his father a worthy sacrifice to God. Isaac then prays God to forgive his sins and asks his father to pardon his disobedience and to bless him. Abraham prays God to bless Isaac and gives him his own blessing—details that we have noticed in several of the plays which we have considered. After they have returned to Sara and she has recovered from her amazement, she praises God, and then " Sarra et tutti gli altri di casa, eccetto Abram e quelli dua

Angeli, ... tutti insieme fanno un ballo cantando questa lauda."[1]

In the Spanish *Auto del Sacreficio de Abraham* there is at least one point of resemblance to *Le Viel Testament* and several English plays, as M. Rouanet has pointed out. Speaking of the passage in the Spanish play " où Isaac prie son père de lui bander les yeux, afin qu'il ne puisse voir le couteau qui va l'égorger," M. Rouanet says : " Cette idée, non exprimée dans la Bible, se trouve dans le *Mistére du Viel Testament*, vers 10227—10230. On la remarque aussi dans les *Chester-Plays*."[2] We may add that it is found also in Y. and B. The lines referred to in *El Sacreficio de Abraham* are the following:

" Y as mis ojos de cubrir
porque a vezes se levanta
yra al tienpo del morir,
y por no ver deçendir
el cuchillo a la garganta." (ll. 528-533)[3]

GOLDING'S TRANSLATION

Golding's version is a very faithful reproduction of Beza's play. It is in the main a line for line translation, and the order of the lines is very rarely disturbed. Occasionally, however, one line is expanded into two, *e. g.* ll. 699 and 890, or more frequently a couplet is translated by four lines, *e. g.* the last two lines of the Prologue and ll. 192-3, 731-2, 823-4, 878-9. Occasionally, too, the order of the lines is transposed, *e. g.* ll. 1-3, 331-7. The only omission I have noted is of lines 5 and 6 of Beza's play. Abbreviations of Beza's text are much rarer than expansions ; compare, however, ll. 282-8 which are reproduced in four lines. When Beza's tetrameters are translated into pentameters the number of lines is sometimes reduced slightly, and it is in these passages that the author's necessity of filling out the verse reacts unhappily upon the

1 *La Rappresentazione di Abraam, e Isaac suo Figliuolo* (Brit. Mus., 11427 d, no date). The 'rappresentazione' is also to be found in *Le Rappresentazioni di Feo Belcari et altre di lui Poesie*, Firenze, 1833, and it is also included in D'Ancona's *Sacre Rappresentazioni*, Firenze, 1872.

2 *Coleccion de Autos, Farsas y Coloquios del Siglo xvi*, publiée par Léo Rouanet, Madrid, 1901, vol. iv, p. 135.

3 *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 19.

effectiveness of his translation, although evidences of padding are not absent from other parts of the work, *e. g.* ll. 24, 39-40, 172 of the English version. The necessity of finding a rhyme has sometimes forced Golding to change the meaning slightly, (l. 46 of Prologue) or to introduce a pointless expression (l. 164). In many verses one or both of Beza's rhyme-words have been retained, and the temptation to do so has sometimes betrayed Golding into wrenching the English accent or otherwise using imperfect rhymes, *e. g.* " vengeance " and " obeysance," " judgments " and " commandments," " imagined " and " examined," " patiently " and " instantly," " reasonable " and " agreeable," " recompense " and " silence." Other imperfect rhymes are rare : I have noted only " undefiled " and "provided," "me" and "me," "thee" and "thee," each of which occurs but once. The literal character of the translation is illustrated by the fact that the repetition of words either for the sake of emphasis or in passages of intense emotion which characterizes especially the speeches of Abraham is reproduced almost invariably by Golding. On the whole the translation is a piece of excellent idiomatic English, and the noble dignity of the song of Abraham and Sara, which departs entirely from Beza's metre is not unworthy of the Elizabethan age, and may serve as an example of that rare phenomenon—a translator's surpassing his original.

The great majority of Golding's verses are in pentameter couplets as are a large proportion of those in the original. Many passages which Beza wrote in tetrameters, however, have been translated into pentameters, *e. g.* Sara's speech ll. 623-657. On the other hand Golding occasionally translates pentameters into tetrameters, *e.g.* the concluding speech of the Angel. In some passages the verse shows a tendency toward end-stopt lines, but of the 655 pentameter verses in the play 188 show " enjambement." Feminine rhyme is found in 14 of the couplets and there are 4 triplets. Alternately rhyming pentameters occur only in lines 250-254. Occasionally the final line of a speech, or a speech which contains but a single line, is left out of the rhyme scheme.

A TRAGEDIE OF ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE,

Written in french by *Theodore Beza*, and translated into Inglish, by A. G.

Finished at Powles Belchamp in Essex, the xj. of August. 1575.

GEN. 15. ROM. 4.

Abraham beleued God, and it was imputed to him for righteousnes.

Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautroullier dwelling in the Blacke Friers.

1577

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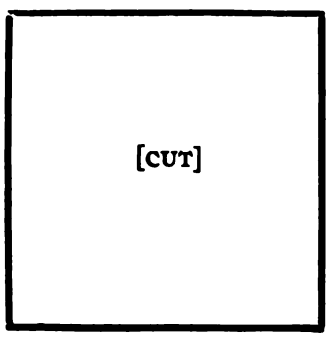
Finished at Povvles Belchamp in Essex, the xi. of August. 1575.

GEN. 15. *ROM.* 4.

Abraham beleued God, and it was imputed to him for righteousnes.



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1577.

THEODORE BEza to the readers, greeting in the Lord.

IT is now a two yeares, since God graunted me the grace to forsake the countrie where he is persecuted, to serue him accordinge to his holy will. During which time, because that in my aduersity many fancies ranne in my head, I resorted to Gods word, where I founde two thinges that comforted me maruelously. The one is the infinite number of promises vttered by the mouth of him which is the truth it selfe, whose sayinges are alwayes matched with effect. The other is the multitude of examples, where-

of euen the least are able enough, not only to encourage and harten the weakest & fayntest harted in the worlde, but also to make them inuincible. Which thing we must needes see to haue come to passe, if we consider by what meanes Gods truth hath bene mayntayned to this present time. Howebeit among all them that are set afore vs for example in the olde testament. I finde three persons, in whome (to my seeming) the Lorde ment to set forth his greatest wonders : namely, Abraham, Moises, and Dauid : in the liues of whome if men would nowe a dayes looke uppon them selues, they should knowe them selues better then they doe. Therefore as I redd those holy stories with wonderfull pleasure and singular profit : there came a desire vppon me to exercise my selfe in writing such matters in verse, not onely of intent to consider & remember them the better, but also to praise God by all the meanes I could deuise. For I confesse, that euen of na-

ture I haue delighted in poetrie, & I can not yet repent me of it : neuerthelesse it greueth me right sore, that the litle grace which God gaue me in that behalfe, was imployed by me in such things, as the very remembrance of them irketh me now at the hart. Therefore I gaue my selfe as then to more holy matters, hoping to go forwarde in them afterwarde, specially in the translating of the Psalmes which I am now in hand with. And woulde God that the great number of good witts which I know in Fraunce, would in steede of buzying them selues about vnhappy inuentions or imitations of vaine and vnhonest fancies, (for so they be, if a man iudge them according to truth) rather set their minds to the magnifying of the great God, of whom they haue receiued those so great giftes, then to the flattering of their Idols, that is to say, of their Lordes and Ladies, whom they vphold in their vices by their fainings & flatterings. Of a truth it would

become them better to sing a song of God, then to counterfet a ballet of Petrarks, & to make amorous ditties, worthy to haue the garlande of sonnetts, or to counterfet the furies of the auncient Poets, to blase abroad the glory of this world, or to consecrate this man or that woman to immortalitie, thinges which beare the readers on hande that the authors of them not only are mounted vp to the toppe of their Pernassus, but also are come to the very circle of the Moone. Othersome (of which number I my selfe haue bene, to my great greefe as now) write twoedged epigrams cutting on both sides or sharppointed & pricking at both endes. Others buzie them selues rather in ouerturning then in turning of thinges: & othersome intending to inrich our tongue, do powder it with Greeke and Latine tearmes. But how now wil some man say: I looked for a tragedie, and thou giuest vs a Satyre. I confesse that in thinking vpon such mad-

nes, I was caried away and ouershot my selfe. Neuerthelesse I ment not to rayle vpon good witts, but onely to discouer to them so plainly the open wronge which they doe both to God and to them selues, as they might through a certeine enuie, take vpon them to passe me in the description of such matters as I haue taken tast of to their handes, according as I knowe that it shall be very easie for them, if the meanest of them will giue him selfe therto. But to come to the matter that I haue in hand, it is partly tragical and partly comicall: & therefore I haue separated the prologue, & diuided the whole into pawses, after the maner of actes in comedies, howbeit without binding of my self therto. And because it holdeth more of the one then of the other: I thought best to name it a tragedie. As touching the maner of dealing, I haue altered some small circumstances of the storie, to apply my selfe to the companye. Moreouer I haue

followed the ground as neare the text as I could, according to such coniectures as I thought most conuenient for the matter and persons. And although the affections be very great, yet haue I absteined from wordes and speeches to farre estraunged from the common ordinarie, notwithstanding that I know it was the maner of the Greekes and Latines so to doe, specially in their chorusses, as they termed them. But I passed so litle of imitating them, that contrariwise me thinkes nothing is more vnseemely, than those forced translations and speeches drawne out of such a length, as they can neuer come to the pith of the matter : whereof I report me to *Aristophanes*, who iustly rebuketh the Poets of his time for it so often times. Verily I haue made a songe without a chorus, nother haue I vsed the termes of *Strophies*, *Antistrophies*, *Epirrhemes*, *Parecbases*, and other such wordes, which serue to no purpose but to amase simple folke, seeing the vse of

of such thinges is worne away, & they be not so commendable of them selues, that a man should trouble him selfe to bringe them vp again. As touching the ortographie, I haue willed the Printer to followe the common order, notwithstanding the fond fancies that haue ben set forth within these three or fower yeares in that behalfe. And I would gladly counsel the forwardest of them that haue altered it, (if they were men that would take any other bodies counsell then their owne) that sith they will needes reduce it to the pronouncing, that is to say, make as many fashions of writinge, not onely as there are countries, but also as ther are persons in Fraunce : they should first learne to pronounce, before they teach men to write. For to speake & write after their fashion he is not worthye to giue rules of the writinge of our tongue, which is not able to speake it. Which thinge I speake not to blame all those that haue set downe their dowts in

that behalf, which I graunt are very needfull to be reformed : but for such as sette forth their dotages as certeine rules for al the world to follow. Furthermore, as touching the profit that may be taken of this singular storie, besides the things that are treated of it in infinite places of the Scripture, I will refer it to him that shal speake of it in the conclusion : praying you whosoeuer you be to accept this my small labour with as good will as I offer it to you. *From Lausan the first of October.* 1550.

THE ARGUMENT
OF THIS TRAGEDIE TAKEN OUT OF THE TWO AND TWENTIDTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

AFteruuard God tryed Abraham, and sayd unto him: Abraham. And he aunsuuered, Here I am. Then sayd he to him, take thyne onely sonne out of hande, euen Isaac uuhome thou louest, & goe into the country of Morea, & there offer him up for a burnt sacrifice uppon one of the hills that I uuill sheuue thee. Abraham therefore rising earely, sadled his asse & tooke tuuo sernants uuith him, & Isaac his sonne. And uuhen he had cut uuood for the burnt sacrifice, he arose and uuent to the place that God had told him of. The third day, Abraham loking up, sauu the place a farre of, and sayd to his seruaunts, tarry you here uuith the Asse, for I and the ladde uuil goe yonder, and uuhen uue haue uuorship-

ped uue uuill come to you againe. Then Abraham took the uuood for the burnt sacrifice, & layd it upon Isaac his sonne, & tooke the fire and a knife in his ouune hand, and so they uuent forth togither. Then sayd Isaac to Abraham his father. My father. Abraham aunsuuered, here I am my sonne. And he said, Beholde here is fire and uuood, but uuhere is the Lambe for burnt sacrifice. Abraham aunsuuered, my sonne, God uuill prouide him a lambe for burnt sacrifice. And they uuent on both togither. And uuhen they came to the place that God had spoken of, he builded an altar there, and layd the uuood in order uppon it, and then bound Isaac his sonne & laid him upon the altar aboue the uuood, and putting forth his hand cauught the knife to stryke of his sonnes necke. Then an Angell of the Lord cryed unto him from heauen, saying Abraham, Abraham. Uuho aunsuuered, loe here I am. And he sayd unto him, lay not thy hand upon the child, nother doe any thing unto him. For nouu I knouue thou fearest God, seeing thou hast

hast not spared thine only sonne for my sake. & Abraham loked up & sauu, & behold a sheep uuas cauught behind him in a bush by the hornes. Then Abraham uuent and tooke the sheepe, and offered it up for a burnt offering in steede of his sonne. And Abraham called the name of the place, The Lord shall see. *Uuhereof it is sayd at this day of that mounteyne,* The Lord shal be seene. *And the Angell of the Lord called unto Abraham from out of heauen the second tyme, saying: I haue suuorne by my selfe sayth the Lorde, for as much as thou hast done this thing, & not spared thyne onely sonne, I uuill blesse thee and multiply thy seede as the starres of the sky, & as the sand on the seas shore, and thy seede shall possesse the gates of thyne enemies. And all nations of the earth shall be blessed in thy seede, because thou hast obeyed my voyce.*

The speakers.

The Prologue.
Abraham
Sara
Isaac
A companie of shepherds of Abrahams ouune house diuided in tuuo partes.
The Angell.
Satan.

THE PROLOGUE

God saue you euery chone both great and small
Of all degrees : right welcom be you all.
It is now long, at least as seemes to me,
since here such preace togither I did see.
VVould God we might each weeke through all the yeare
See such resort in Churches as is here.
Ye Gentlemen and Ladies, I ye pray
Giue eare and harken what I haue to say.
To hold your peace alonly I require.
VVhat weene you(some wil say) by that desire.
VVe nother can nor will away with that.
But yit you must, or else I tell you flat,
That both of vs our labour lose togither,
In speaking I, and you in comming hither.
VVherefore I craue but silence at your hand,
My wordes with patience for to vnderstand.
Both great and small, alonly doe but heare,
And I will tel you straunge & wondrous geere.
VVherefore now harken : for the thing is great
VVhereof I mind this present time to treate.
You thinke your selues perchaunce to be in place,
VVhere as you be not, now as standes the case.
For Lausan is not here, it is farre hence.
But yit when neede requires, I will dispence
VVith all of you, that hence within an hower
Eche one may safely be within his bowre.

As now this is the land of Palestine.
VVhat ? do you wonder at these words of myne ?
I say yit further to you, see you well
Yon place? It is the house wherein doth dwell
A seruaunt of the liuing Gods, whose name
Hight Abraham the righteous man, the same
VVhose liuely faith hath won him endles fame.
Anon you shall him tempted see and tryde,
& toucht to quicke with grefs that shal betide.
And lastly you shall see him iustified
By faith, for killing (in a certeine wise)
Isaac his dearest sonne in sacrifice.
And shortly, you shall see straunge passions :
The flesh, the world his owne affections
Not onely shall be shewed in liuely hew,
But, (which more is) his faith shal them subdue.
And that it is so, many a faithfull wight,
Anon shall beare me record in your sight.
First Abraham, and Sara you shall see,
And Isaac eke shall with them both agree.
Now are not these sufficient witnessings ?
VVho minds therfore to see so wondrous things,
VVe pray him onely talking to forbeare
And vnto vs to giue attentiue eare,
Assuring him that he shall see and heare
No trifling toyes, but graue & wondrous geere,
And that we will his eares to him restore,
to vse them as he listeth as before.

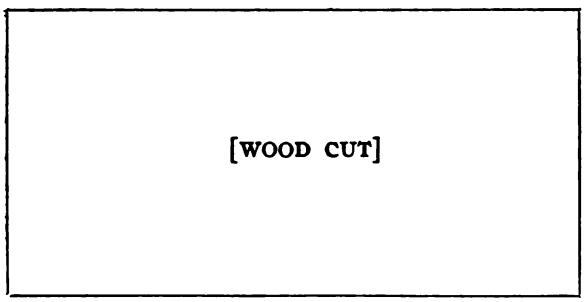
Abra-

Abraham commeth out of his house & saith.

ALas my God, and was there euer any,
That hath indurde of cõbrãces so many,
As I haue done by fleeting too and fra,
Since I my native countrie did forgo?
Or is there any liuing on the ground,
Of benefits that hath such plenty found?
Loe how thou makest mortall men to see,
Thy passing goodnes by calamitie.
And as of nought thou madest euery thing:
So out of ill thou causest good to spring.
Was neuer wight so blessed at thy hand,
That could thy greatnes fully vnderstand.

ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE.

Abraham commeth out of his house & sayth.



Alas my God, and was there euer any,
That hath indurde of combrances so many,
As I haue done by fleeting too and fro,
Since I my natiue countrie did forgo ?
Or is there any liuing on the ground,
Of benefits that hath such plenty found ?
Loe how thou makest mortall men to see,
Thy passing goodnes by calamitie.
And as of nought thou madest euery thing :
So out of ill thou causest good to spring.
Was neuer wight so blessed at thy hand,
That could thy greatnes fully understand.

Full threescore yeares and thereto fifteene mo,
My life had lasted now in weale and woe,
According to the course in sundry wise
Appointed by thy heauenly destinies,
Whose will it was I should be bred and borne
Of Parents rich in catell, coyne, and corne.
But unto him that richest is in fee,
What ioy or comfort could his riches be,
When he compeld, compelled was (I say)
To see, to serue, and worship euery day,
A thowsand forged gods in steede of thee,
Which madst the heauen & earth which we do see ?
Thou then eftsoones didst will me to conuey
My selfe from those same places quite away.
And I immediatly upon thy call,
Left Parents, countrie, goods with gods & all.
Yea Lord, thou knowest I wist not whither then
Thou wouldst me lead, nor where me stay agen :
But he that followeth thee, full well may say,
He goeth right : and while he holds that way
He neuer needes to feare that he shall stray.

Sara comming out of the same house sayth.

In thinking and bethinking me what store
Of benefits I haue had erst heretofore,
Of thee my God which euer hast prouided
To keepe my mind and bodie undefiled,

And

And furthermore according to thy word
(Which I tooke then as spoken but in boord)
Hast blist my aged time aboue all other,
By giuing me the happy name of mother.
I am so rauisht in my thought and mind,
That (as I would full fayne) no meane I find
The least of all the benefits to commend,
Which thou my God doest daily still me send.
Yit sith alone with thee Lord here I am,
I will thee thanke at least wise as I can.
But is not yun my husband whom I see ?
I thought he had bin further of from me.

Abraham.

Sara Sara, thy mind I well allow,
Nought hast thou sayd but I the same auow.
Come on, and let us both giue thankes togither
For Gods great mercy since our comming hither
The frute thereof as both of us hath found :
Let prayse & thankes from both of us resownd.

Sara.

Contented Sir, how might I better doe,
Than you to please in all you set me too ?
And euen therefore hath God ordeyned me.
Agein, wherein can time spent better be,
Than in the setting forth of Gods dew praise,
Whose maiestie doth shew it selfe alwayes,
Aboue and eke beneath, before our eyes?

Abraham.

Of truth no better can a man deuise,
Than of the Lord to sing the excellence,
For none can pay him other recompence
For all his giftes which daily he doth send,
Than in the same, his goodnes to commend.

The Song of Abraham and Sara.

Come on then, let us now begin to sing
with hartes in one accord,
The prayses of the souerein heauenly king
our onely God and Lord.
His onely hand doth giue us whatsoeuer
We haue, or shall hereafter haue for euer.

It is alonly he that doth mainteine
the heauen that is so hie,
So large in compasse and in space so mayne :
and eke the starrie skie,
The course whereof he stablisht hath so sure,
That ay withouten fayle it doth endure.

The skorching heate of sommer he doth make,
the haruest and the spring :
And winters cold that maketh folke to quake,
in season he doth bring.
Both wethers, faire, and fowle, both sea & land,
Both night and day be ruled by his hand.

Alas good Lord ! and what are we that thou
didst

didst choose and enterteyne
Alonly us of all the world, and now
doth safely us mainteine
So long a time from all the wicked rowtes
In towne & country where we come throughouts.

Thou of thy goodnes drewest us away
from places that are giuen
To serue false gods : and at this present day
hast wandringly us driuen,
To trauell still among a thowsand daungers,
In nacions unto whom we be but straungers.

The land of Egypt in our chiefest neede
thou madst to haue a care,
Thy seruants bodies to mainteine and feede
with fine and wholsom fare,
And in the ende compelledst Pharao,
Full sore against his will, to let us goe.

Foure mightie Kinges that were already gon
away with victorie,
I ouertooke and put to flight anon
before they could me spie.
And so I saw the feeldes all stained red
With blud of those which through my sword lay dead.

From God receiued well this benefite :
for he doth mind us still,
As his deere freendes in whom he doth delight,

and we be sure he will,
Performe us all thinges in dew time and place,
As he hath promist of his owne free grace.

To us and unto our posteritie
this land belongs of right,
To hold in honor and felicitie
as God it hath behight,
And we beleue it surely shall be so,
For from his promise God will neuer goe.

Now tremble you ye wicked wights therefore,
which sowed are so thicke
Throughout the world, & worship now such store
of gods of stone and sticke,
which you your selues with wicked hands do carue,
To call upon and vainly for to serue.

And thou O Lord whom we doe know to be
the true and liuing God,
Come from thy place, that we may one day see
the vengeance of thy rodde
Upon thy foes, that they may come to nowght
With all their gods deuizd through wicked thowght.

Abraham.

Go to my Sara, that great God of ours
Hath blist us, to thintent that we all howres
Should for his giftes which he alone doth giue,

Him

Him serue and prayse as long as we doe liue.
Now let us hence and chiefly take good heede,
We hazard not our sonne to much in deede,
By suffering him to haunt the company
Of wicked folke, with whom you see we be.
A new made vessell holdeth long the sent
Of that that first of all is in it pent.
A child by nature nere so well dispozed,
By bringing up is quite and cleane transpozed.

Sara.

Sir, I doe hope my dewtie for to doe,
Therefore the thing that we must looke unto,
Is that Gods will may be fulfild in him.
Right sure I am we shall him weeld so trim,
And that the Lord will blisse him so : as all
Shall in the ende to his high honor fall.

Satan in the habit of a Monke.

I goe, I come, I trauell night and day,
I beate my braynes, that by no kind of way
My labour be in any wise misspent.
Reigne God aloft aboue the firmament,
The earth at least to me doth wholly draw,
And that mislikes not God nor yet his lawe
As God by his in heauen is honored :
So I on earth by myne am worshipped.
God dwells in heauen, and I on earth likewize :

God maketh peace, and I doe warres deuize.
God reignes aboue, and I doe reigne belowe :
God causeth loue, and I doe hatred sowe.
God made the starrie skies and earthy clodds :
I made much more : for I did make the godds.
God serued is by Angells full of light :
And doe not my faire Angells glister bright ?
I trow there is not one of all my swine,
Whose grooyn I make not godlike for to shine.
These lechours, drunkards, gluttons ouerfedd,
Whose noses shine faire tipt with brazell redd,
Which weare fine precious stones uppon their skinnes,
Are my upholders & my Cherubins.
God neuer made a thing so perfect yit,
That could the makers full perfection hit.
But I haue made, (whereof I glory may)
A thowsand worser than my selfe farre way.
For I beleue and know it in my thought,
therz but one God, & that my self am nowght.
But yit I know there are whose foolish mind
I haue so turned quite against the kind,
That some (which now is common long agone)
Had leuer serue a thowsand gods than one.
And others haue conceiued in their brayne,
That for to thinke there is a God is vayne.
Thus since the time that man on mowld was made,
With happy lucke I followed haue this trade

And

And follow wil (come losse or come there gain)
So long as I this habit may mainteine,
I say this habit wherewithall as now
The world is unacquainted : but I vow
The day shall come it shall be knowne so rife,
Of euery wight, both child, yea man, and wife,
That nother towne nor village shall scape free
From seeing it to their great miserie.
O cowle, o cowle, such mischef thou shalt wurk,
And such abuse shall underneath thee lurke
At high noone daies : O Cowle, o Cowle I say,
Such mischief to the world thou shalt conuey,
That if it were not for the spitefulnesse,
Wherewith my hart is frawghted in excesse:
Euen I my selfe the wretched world shall rew,
To see the things that shall through thee insew.
For I, than who, of all none worse can be,
Am made yit worse by putting on of thee.
These thinges shall in their time without all faile
Be brought to passe. As now I will assaile
One Abraham, who onely with his race
Withstands me, and defies me to my face.
In deede I haue him often times assailed :
But euer of my purpose I haue failed.
I neuer saw olde fellow hold such tack.
But I will lay such loade upon his backe,
That (as I hope) ere long I shall him make

A sonne of myne. I know that he doth take
The true Creator for his onely hold
To trust unto : and that doth make him bold.
In deede he hath alliance with the trew
Creator, who hath promist him a new
Right wondrous thinges, according whereunto
He hath already done, and still will doe.
But what for that ? If stedfastnes him faile
To hold out still : what shall his hope auaile ?
I trow I will so many blowes him giue,
That from his hold at length I shall him driue.
His elder sonne I feare not : and the other
Shal hardly scape these hands of mine : the mother
Is but a woman : as for all the meynie
That serue him, they be simple sowles as enie
Can lightly be : there is a ragged rowt
Of sillie shepherds, nother skild nor stowt
Ynough against my wily sleights to stand.
But hence I will and worke so out of hand,
To haue them, that unlesse I misse my marke,
Anon I will deceiue their greatest Clarke.

Abraham comming out of his house agein sayth.

What euer thing I doe or say,
I weery am thereof streit way,
How meete so euer that it bee,

Soe wicked nature reignes in me.
But most of all it me mislikes,
And to the hart with sorrow strikes,
That seeing God is neuer tyrde
In helping me, yea undezyrde :
I also likewise doe not streyne
My selfe, unweerie to remayne,
In dew and trew acknowledgment,
Of his great mercie to me sent,
As well with mouth as with my hart.

The Angell.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Lord here I am.

Angell.

Goe take thyne onely deerebeloued sonne,
Euen Isaac, and bring him to the place
which hight the myrrh of God : which being done,
Slea him in sacrifice before my face :
And burne him whole upon a hill which I
Will shew thee there, goe hye thee by and by.

Abraham.

What ! burne him ! burne him ! wel I wil do so.
But yit my God, the thing thou putst me to
Seemes very straunge and irksom for to be ·
Lord, I beseech thee, wilt thou pardon me ?

Alas, I pray thee giue me strength and power,
To doe that thou commaundest me this howre.
I well perceiue and plainly now doe find,
That thou art angrie with me in thy mind.
Alas my Lord I haue offended thee.
O God by whom both heauen & earth made be,
With whom intendest thou to be at warre ?
And wilt thou cast thy seruaunt downe so farre ?
Alas my sonne, alas, what shall I doe ?
This matter askes aduised looking too.

A companie of Shepherdes comming out of Abrahams house. The one halfe of them.

Hie time it is Sirs as I trow
We hie us packing on a row
To our companions where they be.

The other halfe.

Euen so thinkes me.
For if we all togither were
We should the lesser neede to feare.

Isaac.

How Sirs, I pray you tary. Will
You leaue me so behind you still ?

Shepherds.

Good child abide you there,

Or else our maister your father
And our mistresse your mother may,
Be angrie for your going away :
The time will come by Gods good grace,
That you shall grow and proue a pace :
And then ye shall perceiue the charge,
Of keeping flocks in feelds at large,
What daungers come from hill and dale,
By rauening beasts that lye in stale,
Among the couerts of the woode,
To kill our cattell for their foodd.

Isaac.

And doe ye thinke I would,
Goe with you though I could,
Before I knew my fathers mind ?

Shepherds.

In deede a child of honest kind,
And well brought up, ought euermore
His fathers and his mothers lore
In all his doings to obey.

Isaac.

I will not fayle it (if I may)
To die therefore : but will ye stay
A while untill I ronne and know
My fathers will ? *Shep.* Yea, therefore goe.

The Song of the Shepherds.

O happy is the wight
That grounds him selfe aright
On God, and maketh him his shield:
And lets the worldly wize,
Which looke aboue the skies,
Goe wander where they list in field.

No rich, ne poore estate,
Can puffe or yit abate,
The godly and the faithfull hart:
The faithfull goeth free
Although he martred be
A thowsand times with woe and smart.

The mighty God him leeds,
In chiefest of his needes,
And hath of him a speciall care,
To make him to abide,
Euen at the poynt to slide,
When worst of all he seemes to fare.

Whereof a proofe we see
Our maister well may be:
For why, the more him men assayle
And urge on euery side:
Lesse feare in him is spyde,
And lesse his courage doth him fayle.

He left his natiue soyle,
Hard

Hard famin did him foyle,
Which draue him into Egypt land,
And there a king of might,
Tooke Sara from his sight,
[330.] Uniustly euen by force of hand.

But streit on sute to God,
The king through Gods sharp rod,
Did yeeld to him his wife streit way,
And Abraham neuer stayd,
[335.] But as the king him prayd,
Departed thence without delay.

And during this his flight,
He grew to so good plight,
That Loth to part away was faine :
[340.] Bycause, as stoode the case,
To litle was the place,
To keepe the flockes of both them twayne.

There fell a sodeyn iarre
Betweene nine Kings through warre,
[345.] Wherein fiue kings were put to flight,
And Loth him selfe, with all
His goods both great and small,
Away was caried cleane and quite.

Our faithfull Maister streit,
[350.] On newes of this conceit,
Made fresh pursute immediatly :

And hauing but as then
Three hundred eighteene men,
Did make the enmies all to fly.

And of the reskewd pray
The tenth to the Preest did pay.
And hauing done ech man his right,
Returned home anon,
With commendacion
For putting so his foes to flight.

But mother sonne he had,
Nor daughter him to glad.
Which thing when Sara did perceiue,
She put her maid in bed,
To serue her husbands sted,
Bycause her selfe could not conceiue.

So Agar bare a sonne
A thirteene yeares outronne.
Whose name is called Ismael.
And to this present day,
Our maisters goods are ay
Increased passing woondrous well.

Then for the couenants sake
Which God him selfe did make,
Betwene him and our maister deere,
Our maister and we all,
As well the great as small,
At once all circumcized were.

Isaac

Isaac.

My fellowes : God hath shewed himselfe to us,
So good, so louing and so gracious,
That I can neuer any thing yit craue
Ne small ne great, but that I much more haue,
Than I desire. I would haue gone with you
(As you doe know) to see full fayne : but now
Behold my father commeth here at hand.

Abraham and Sara.

But it behoueth us to understand,
That if God will us any thing to doe,
We must streyt wayes obedient be thereto,
And nother striue nor speake against his will.

Sara.

In deede Sir so I thinke and purpose still.
But yit I pray you thinke not straunge, that I
Doe take this matter somewhat heauily.

Abraham.

A good hart (wife) doth shew it self at neede.

Sara.

Thats trew : & therfore lets be sure in deede,
It is Gods will and mind we should doe so.
We haue but this child onely and no mo
Who yit is weake : in him stands all the trust
Of all our hope, with him it falls to dust.

Abraham.

Nay rather in God.

Sara.

But giue me leaue to say.

Abraham.

Can euer God his word once sayd unsay ?
No no, and therefore be you out of dowt,
That God wil keepe & prosper him throughout.

Sara.

Yea, but will God haue us to hazard him ?

Abraham.

No hazarding it is where God doth gard him.

Sara.

My hart misgiueth some mishappe.

Abraham.

I nother dread nor dowt of any hap.

Sara.

There is in hand some secret enterpryze.

Abraham.

What ere it be, it doth from God aryze.

Sara.

At least, if what it were you wist.

Abraham.

I shall ere long, if God so list.

Sara.

So

So long away the child will neare abide.

Abraham.

For that our God will well ynough prouide.

Sara.

Yea but the wayes now full of daungers are.

Abraham.

Who dyes in following God needs neuer care.

Sara.

If he should dye, then farewel our good dayes.

Abraham.

God doth foresett mens dying times alwayes.

Sara.

It were much better here to sacrifyze.

Abraham.

What euer you thinke, God thinks otherwise.

Sara.

Well then Sir, sith it must be so
The grace of God with both you goe.
Adiew my sonne.

Isaac.

Good mother eke adieu.

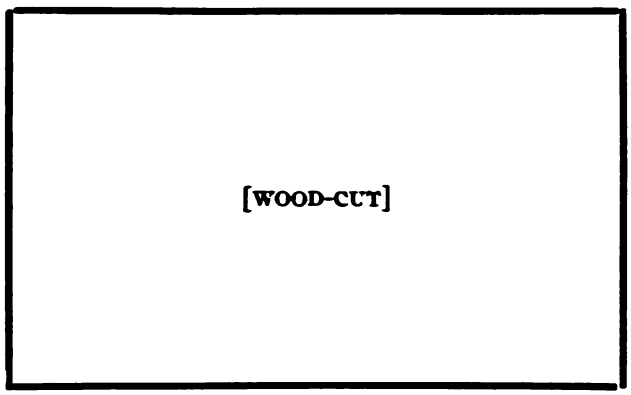
Sara.

My sonne obey thy father still,
'And God thee saue : that if it be his will
Thou mayst in health returne right soone agein.

My child I can not me refreyne
But that I needes must kisse the now.

Isaac.

Good mother, if it should not trouble you,
I would desire you one thing ere I went.



Sara.

Say on my sonne : for I am well content
To graunt thee thy request.

Isaac.

I humbly doe you pray
To put this greef away.
These teares of yours refreyne,
I shall returne ageine
(I hope) in better plyght,

Than

My child I can not me refreyne
But that I needes muſt kiſſe the now.

Iſaac.

Good mother, if it ſhould not trouble you,
I would deſire you one thing ere I went.

Sara.

Say on my ſonne: for I am well content
To graunt thee thy requeſt.

Iſaac.

I humbly doe you pray
To put this greef away.
Theſe teares of yours refreyne,
I ſhall returne ageine
(I hope) in better plyght,

Than

Than now I am in sygh̄t :
And therefore stay this greef and wo.

Abraham.

My fellowes : we haue now to goe
Good six daies iorney ere we rest :
[440.] See that your cariages be prest
And all the things that we shall neede.

The Companie.

Sir, as for that let us take heede.
Doe you no more but onely shew your will.

Abraham.

On then : and God be with you still.
[445.] The mightie God who of his goodnesse ay,
From time to time euen to this present day,
So kind and gracious unto us hath be,
Be helpfull still both unto you and mee.
Deale wisely howsoeuer that you fare :
[450.] I hope this iorney which we going are
Shall be performed happily.

Sara.

Alas alas full litle wote I
When I shall see you all ageine.
The Lord now with you all remayne.

Isaac.

[455.] Good mother God you guyde.

Abrahams.

Farewell.

The Companie.

God guide, and keepe you through his grace.

Abrahams.

Come on Sirs, let us hence apace.

Satan.

But is not this ynough to make me mad,
That whereas I make euery man to gad,
And all the world to follow after me,
If they my finger doe but hild up see,
And therwithall set all thinges on a rore :
Yit for all that I neuer could the more
This false olde fellow bring unto my lure,
For any thing that yit I can procure ?
Behold he is departed from this place
Gods will full bent tobey in euery cace,
Although the matter neuer be so straunge.
But yit it may be that his mind will chaunge,
Or that he shall him sacrifyze in deede,
And so he shall if I may help him speede.
For if he doe, then Isaac shall be dead,
Whereby my hart shall be delinered
Of that same feare least God in him fulfill,
The threate whereby he promist me to spill.
And if he chaunge his mind, then may I say
The

The gold is wonne. For may I once so play
My part, as for to make him disobey
Almighty Gods commaundment, or repyne :
[480.] Then were he banisht from the grace diuine.
That is the marke whereat I alwayes shoote,
Now hye thee Cowle, set forth the better foote :
Lets ronne apace, and by some cunning drift
Foyle him in feeld, or put him to his shift.

A PAUUZE.

Abraham.

[485.] My children : this is now the third day
That we haue traueld making little stay.
Here must you tarry : as for me, I will
With Isaac, goe yit further onward still,
Unto a place from hence yet distant more
[490.] Which God almighty shewed me before,
Where I must pray and offer sacrifyze
As he requires. Wherefore in any wyze
Abide you here, and stirre not hence. But thou
Sonne Isaac shalt goe with me as now :
[495.] For God requires in this behalfe thy presence.

The Shepherds

Sir, sith you forbid us we will not hence.

Abraham.

This bundle unto him betake,
And I the fire and knife will take.

We shal (God willing) come agein right soone
[500.] But in the meane while, wot ye what to doone ?
Pray ye to God both for your selues and us.
Alas, alas, was neuer wyght, ywus.

Shepherds.

We will not fayle.

Abraham.

That had such neede as I.
Well Sirs, I say no more but God be wy.

Shepherds.

And with you too.

Halfe the Shepherds.

It greatly mazeth me.

Halfe the Shepherds.

And me likewyze.

Halfe the Shepherds.

And me too, for too see
Him so dismayd which hath so stowtly borne
All haps that haue befalne him heretooforne.

Halfe the Shepherds.

To say he is afrayd of warre
[510.] Debate, or strife, or any iarre
It were no reason : for we knowe,
Abimelech the king did showe
Such honor to our maisterward,
That he not onely had regard

To

To visit him, but eke did knit
A leage with him which lasteth yit.
And as for howshold matters, what
Can he desire which he hath nat ?

Halfe the Shepherds.

He liues in outward peace and rest :
But age perchaunce doth woork unrest.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Of zunnes he hath but onely one
But in the world mo such are none.
His cattell thryue in such great store,
As God doth seeme to giue him more,
Than he him selfe can wish or craue.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Nothing ye can so perfect haue,
But alwaies sumwhat is amisse.
I pray to God him so to blisse,
As soone to cure this his disease.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Amen, say I, if it him please.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Sure I suppoze how ere the cace doth stand
He hath this time some weightie thing in hand.

The song of the Shepherds.

As howge as is the world we see
With all the things that in it be,

Yet nothing is so strong and sure,
That can for euer here endure.
Almighty God which all mainteynes,
Can nothing spie that ay remaynes,
Except him selfe : all else ech one
Indure short time, and soone are gone.
The sunne with bright and burning beames
Goes casting forth his cheerefull gleames,
As long as day in skie doth last.
Then darksom night doth ouer cast,
All kind of thinges both fowle and fayre,
With coleblacke winges aloft in ayre.
And of the moone what shall we say,
Which neuer keepeth at a stay ?
Sometimes with hornes she doth appeere :
Sometime halfe fast : now thicke, now cleere :
Anon with rownd and fulsom face
The night she fro the skie doth chace.
The twincling starres aboue on hye
Ronne rolling rownd about the skye,
One while with wether fayre and cleere,
Another while with lowring cheere.
Two dayes togither match, and ye
Them like in all poynts shall not see.
The one doth passe more swift away,
The other longer while doth stay :
The one, as though it did us spyght,

Bereeues

Bereeues us of the cheerfull lyght :
The other with his color bryght
Doth ioy our hart and dim our sight.
One burnes the world with heate from skyes,
With frost and cold another dyes.
With purple, greene, blew, white, and red
The earth earwhile is ouerspred.
Anon a blast of nipping cold
Maks freshest thinges looke seare and old.
The riuers with their waters moyst
Aboue their bankes are often hoyst,
And passe their bownds with rage so farre,
That they the plowmans hope doe marre.*j*
And afterward they fall within
Their chanells, ronning lank and thin.
And therefore whoso doth him grownd,
On awght that in the world is fownd,
Beneath or in the starrie skyes,
I say I count him nothing wyze ?
What then of him is to be sayd,
Whose hope on man is wholly stayd ?
Ech liuing creature subiect is
To endlesse inconueniencis :
And yit among them all, the sunne,
In all his course which he doth runne,
Beholdeth not a feebler wyght,
Than man is in his cheefest plyght.

For he that is most wyze and stowt,
Is so beseeged rownd abowt,
And so assayld with vices strong,
That often he is throwen along.
What a foole is he, whose hart
Thinks to be free from wo and smart,
So long as he doth liue on mowld ?
But if that any creature wowld
Be sure taccumplish that desire :
He must goe set his hart more higher.
Whereof our maister rightly may
A good example bee that way.

Halfe the Shepherds.

The best I thinke that can be now espyde,
Is for too draw us one asyde,
That ech of us may by him selfe alone
Pray God to send our maister which is gone,
A safe returne with gladnesse. gowe.

Halfe the Shepherds.

I will not be behind I trowe.

A pause.

Isaac.

My father.

Abraham.

Alas a poore father am I.

Isaac.

Sir

Sir here is woode, with fire, and knyfe redy:
But as for sheepe or lambe I see none here.
For you to offer.

Abraham.

O my sonne most deere,
God will prouide. Abide thou heere I say,
While I to God a litle whyle doo pray.

Isaac.

Good father go: but yit I pray you showe
Me whereupon this greef of yours doth growe,
Which doth (I see) so greatly you appall.

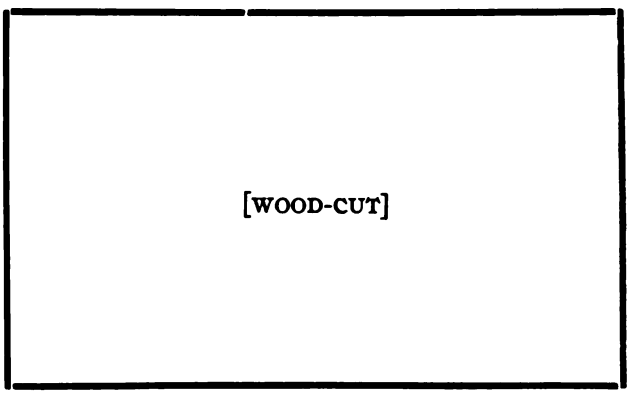
Abraham.

At my returne, my sonne, thou shalt know all.
But in the meane tyme pray thy selfe heere too.

Sir here is woode, with fire, and knyfe redy :
But as for sheepe or lambe I see none here
[610.] For you to offer.

Abraham.

O my sonne most deere,
God will prouide. Abide thou heere I say,
While I to God a litle whyle doo pray.



Isaac.

Good father go : but yit I pray you showe
Me whereupon this greef of yours doth growe,
[615.] Which doth (I see) so greatly you appall.

Abraham.

At my returne, my sonne, thou shalt know all.
But in the meane tyme pray thy selfe heeretoo.

Isaac.

It is good reason that I should so doe.
And therewithall I will ech thing addresse,
That first this wood may be in redinesse.
This billet first shall gin the order heere :
Then this, then that shall cloze togither neere.
Thus all these thinges are redie now and prest :
My father shall prouide for all the rest.
And now O God I will aside retyre,
To pray to thee, as reason doth requyre.

Sara

The more we liue, the more we see, alas,
What life it is that in this world we passe.
Was neuer woman borne upon the mowld,
That for hir husband or hir yssue could
Hirselfe with me in happinesse compare.
But yit I haue indurde such greefe and care
These last three dayes since they went hence, that well
I am not able for my life to tell,
Which of the twayne hath greater to me beene,
The former ioy, or present peyne I meene
Which I haue felt these last 3 dayes, since they
Haue bin away : for nother night nor day
Haue I tane rest, bycause my mind doth ronne
On nothing but my husband and my sonne.
And of a truth I was to blame as tho,
In that I suffered them away to goe,
And

And went not with them. Of the six dayes three,
Alas but three my God, yit passed bee,
And yit three mo my patience still must proue.
Alas my God which seest me from aboue,
Both outwardly and inwardly alway,
Vowtsafe to shorten these three yeeres I say,
For were they much more shorter than they be,
They be not dayes, but moneths & yeeres to me
My God, thy promis putts me out of dowt :
But if thou long delay the falling out,
I feare I shall haue neede of greater strength,
To beare the peyne in holding out at length.
Wherefore my God, now graunt thou unto me
I may with ioy right soone my husband see,
And eke mine Isaac in mine armes embrace
Returnd in helth and saftie to this place.

Abraham.

O God my God, thou seest my open hart,
And of my thowghts thou seest ech secret part,
So that my cace I neede not to declare.
Thou seest, alas thou seest my wofull care.
Thou onely canst me rid of my diseaze,
By graunting me (if that it might thee pleaze)
One onely thing the which I dare not craue.

Satan.

An other song then this yit must we haue.

Abraham.

What ? what ? and is it possible that Gods
Behest and deede should euer be at oddes ?
Can he deceiue ? euen to this present day
He hath kept towche in all that he did say.
And can he now unsay his word ? no, no.
But yit it would ensew he should doe so,
If he my sonne should take away as now.
What say I ? O my God, my God, sith thow
Doost bid me, I will doe it. Is it right
That I so sinfull and so wretched wight,
Should fall to scanning of the iudgements
Of thy most perfect pure commaundements.

Satan.

My cace goes ill. O Cowle we must yit find
Some other way tassault this hagards mind.

Abraham.

It maybe that I haue imagined
Amisse : the more it is examined,
The more the cace seemes straunge. It was perchaunce
Some dreame or wicked feend that at a glaunce
Did put this matter in my head for why,
So cruell offrings please not God perdye.
He cursed Cayne for killing of his brother :
And shall I kill myne Isaac and none other ?

Satan.

No

No no. Neuer doe soe.

Abraham.

Alas alas what ment I so to sayne ?
Forgiue me, Lord, and pluck me backe agein
From this leawd race wherein my sin gan go :
O Lord my God deliuer me from this wo.
This hand of mine shall certeinly him smight.
For sith it is thy will, it is good right
It should de doone. Wherfore I will obey.

Satan.

But I will keepe you from it if I may.

Abraham.

So doing I should make my God untrew,
For he hath told me that there should insew,
So great a people out of this my sonne,
As ouer all the earth should spred and ronne,
And therefore if that Isaac once were kild,
I see not how this couenant could be hild.
Alas Lord, hast thou made him then for nowght ?
Alas Lord, is it vaine that thou so oft
Hast promist me such things in Isaake,
As thou wooldst neuer doo for others sake ?
Alas and can the things repealed be,
Which thou so oft hast promist unto me ?
Alas and shall my hope haue such an end ?
Whereto should then mans hope & trusting tend?

The summe of all I minded to haue sayd,
Is that to thee I hartily haue prayd,
To giue me yssue : hoping that when thow
Hadst graunted it, I should haue liued now
In ioy and pleasure : but I see full well,
The contrary to my desire befell.
For of my sonns, which were no mo but twayn,
To put away the one my selfe was fayne :
And of the other (O hard extremitee)
Both father I, and tormenter must be,
Yea tormenter, yea tormenter, alas.
But are not thou the selfe same God, which was
Contented for too heere me patiently,
When I did pray to thee so instantly,
Euen in the midds of all thy wrath and yre,
When Sodom thou didst mind to burne with fire ?
Now then my God and king, wilt thou say nay,
When fo. my selfe I unto thee doe pray ?
Whom I begate him must I now deface.
O God, at leastwise graunt me yit this grace.

Satan.

Grace ? in my book that word I neuer found.

Abraham.

Some other man my sonne to death may wownd
Alas my Lord, and must this hand of myne
To such a stroke against all kind declyne ?
How will it towch his wofull mother neere,
when

When of his violent death she needes shal heere ?
If I alledge thy will for my defence,
Who will beleue that thou wilt so dispence ?
And if men doe not credit it : what fame
Will fly abrode to my perpetuall shame ?
I shall be shund of all men more and lesse,
As paterne of extremest cruelnesse.
And as for thee, who will unto thee pray,
Or on thy word and promise euer stay ?
Alas, may these hore heares of myne abide
The sorrow that is likely to betide ?
Haue I alredy past so many daungers,
Haue I so traueld countries that are straungers,
In heate and cold, in thirst and hunger still,
Gontinewally obedient to thy will :
Haue I so long time liued lingringly,
Now in the end to dye unhappily ?
O hart of mine, clyue, clyue, asunder clyue :
And linger heere no longer time aliue.
The speedier death, the lesser is the greef.

Satan.

Now is he downe, if God send no releef.

Abraham.

What sayd I ? what intend I ? O my God
Which didst create and make me of a clod,
Thou art my Lord, and I thy seruant trew.
Out of my natiue countrie thou me drew.

How oftentimes hast thou assured me,
That unto mine this land should lotted be ?
And when thou gaue me Isaac, didst not thow
Most faithfully and constantly auow,
That out of him such offspring should be bred,
As should this land throughout all ouerspred ?
Then if thou wilt needs take him now away,
What should I thereunto ageinst thee say ?
He is thine owne, I had him of thy gift.
Take him therfore. Thou knowest best how to shift.
I know thou wilt to life him rayze againe,
Rather than that thy promis should be vaine,
Howbeit Lord, thou knowest I am a man,
No good at all or doo or thinke I can.
But yit thy power which ay is inuincible,
Doth to beleef make all things possible.
Hence flesh, hence fond affections euerychone :
Ye humane passions let me now alone.
Nothing to me is good or reasonable,
Which to Gods will is not agreeable.

Satan.

Well, well, then Isaac shall dye : and wee
What will insew thereof shall after see.
O false old hag, thou makste me soft to grone.

Abraham.

See where my sonne walks up & downe alone.
O silie child ! O wretched men, death oft
Within

Within our bosoms lodgeth him full soft,
When furthest of we take him for too be.
And therfore right great need alwaies haue we
To leade such life, as if we fayne would die.
But wotest thou my sonne (alas) what I
Intend to say ?

Isaac.

What pleaseth you good father.

Abraham.

Alas, that word doth kill my hart the rather.
Yit must I better corage to me take.
Isaac my sonne : alas my hart doth quake.

Isaac.

Father, me thinks that feare hath you dismayd.

Abraham.

O my deere child : it is as thou hast sayd.
Alas my God.

Isaac.

Sir if it may you pleaze,
Be bold to tell me what doth you diseaze.

Abraham.

Ah my deere child, wist thou what thing it were
Mercie good Lord, thy mercie graunt us here.
My sonne my sonne, beholdest thou this lyne.
This wood, this fire, and eke this knife of myne ?
This geere my Isac serueth all for thee.

Satan.

Of God and nature enmie though I bee :
Yit is this thing so hard a cace to see,
That euen almost it is a greef to mee.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne.

Isaac.

Alas my father deere,
Uppon my knees I humbly pray you heere,
My youthfull yeeres to pitie, if you may.

Abraham.

O of mine age the only staffe and stay,
My derling, O my derling, faine would I
That I for thee a thowsand times might dye :
But God will haue it otherwise as now.

Isaac.

Alas my father, mercie I kry you.
Alas alas I want both tung and hand,
Ageinst you in mine owne defence to stand.
But see, but see my teares for natures sake,
None other fence I can or will now make
Ageinst you. I am Isaac, none other
But Isaac, your only by my mother.
I am your sonne that through your self hath life
And will you let it be bereft with knife ?
Howbeit, if you do't to'bey the Lord,

Then on my knees I humbly doe accord,
To suffer all that euer God and yow,
Shall think expedient for too doo as now.
But yit what deeds, what deeds of mine deserue
This death O God. my God my life preserue.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne, God hath commaunded me
To make an offring unto him of thee,
To my great greef, to my great greef and pine,
And endlesse wo.

Isaac.

Alas poore mother mine.
How many deathes shall my death giue to thee ?
But tell me yit, my killer who shall be ?

Abraham.

Who ? my deere son ! my God my God graunt grace,
That I may dy now present in this place.

Isaac.

O father mine.

Abraham.

Alas, no whit that name
Agrees to me. yit should we be to blame
If we obeyd not God. *Isaac.* Sir I am redy.

Satan.

Who would haue thought he would haue bin so stedie ?

Isaac.

Now then my father, well I see in deede
That I must dye. Lord help me at my neede.
My God, my God, now strengthen thou my mind
And at thy hand such fauor let me find,
That of my selfe I may the upper hand
Obteyne, ageinst this sodein death to stand.
Now bind me, kill me, burne me, I am prest
To suffer all, sith God so thinks it best.

Abraham.

Ah what a thing, a what a sight is heere !
Mercie good God, now for thy mercie deere.

Isaac.

Thou Lord hast made me and created me,
Thou Lord upon the earth hast lodged me,
Thou hast me giuen the grace to knowledge thee :
Yit haue I not so well obeyed thee
My Lord and God as dewtie doth require :
Which me to pardon lowd I thee desire.
And whereas I to you my Lord and father
Haue not alwaies such honor yeelded rather,
As your great kindnesse did deserue to haue :
Therfore forgiuenesse humbly I doe craue.
My mother : she is now a great way hence,
Wherfore my God vowtsafe hir thy defence,
And so preserue hir through thy speciall grace,

As

5.] As she no whit be trubbled at my cace.

Here Isaac is bound.

Alas, I go to deepe and darksom night :
Farewell as now for ay all worldly light.
But sure I am I shall at Gods hand find
Farre better things than these I leaue behind.

o.] Good father, I am redy at your will.

Satan.

Was neuer child that spake with better skil.
I am ashamde, and therfore take my flight.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne, before thou leaue this light
And that my hand doe giue thunkindly blowe,

5.] Upon thy mouth let me a kisse bestowe.
Isac my sonne, let this same arme of mine
Which must thee kil, imbrace this neck of thine.

Isaac.

With right good will and hartie thankes.

Abraham.

Ye skyes the great gods woork ay glistring in our eyes

o.] Which well haue seene how God (who still is trew)
Did me with frute by Isaac here indew :
And thou O land fiue times to me behight,
Beare witnesse that my fingers doo not smight
This child of mine for hatred or for vengance,

But only for to yeeld my dew obeysance,
To that great God which hath created me,
And all the thinges that liue or moue or be :
Who saues the good that put in him their trust,
And stroyes the bad that serue their wicked lust.
Beare witnesse that I faithfull Abraham,
Through gods great goodnes stil so stedfast am
As notwithstanding all that humane wit
Can say or think, to make me now to flit :
In one beleef I euer doo remaine,
That not one word of God doth happen vaine.
But now my hand, high time it is that thow
Doo gather strength to execute thy vow.
Heere the knife falles out of his hand.
That by thy killing of mine only sonne,
Thy deadly stroke may through my hart eke ronne

Isaac.

What doe I heere ?
Alas my father deere !

Abraham.

A, a, a, a.

Isaac.

I am at your will.
Am I now well ? your pleasure then fulfill.

Abraham.

Did euer man so piteous cace yit find ?

Was

Was euer any friendſhip yet ſo kind?
And was there euer yet ſo piteous face,
I dye my ſonne, I dye before thy face.

Iſaac.

Away with all this feare of yours I pray.
Will you from God yet longer time me ſtay?

Abraham.

Heere he intendeth to ſtryke him.

Alas who euer yet ſo ſtowt a mind
Within ſo weake a bodie erſt did find?
Alas my ſonne I prey thee me forgiue
Thy death. It kills me that thou may not liue.

The Angell.

Abraham, Abraham.

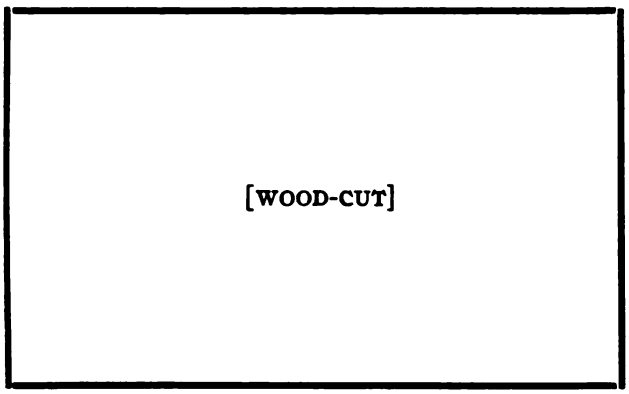
Was euer any frendship yit so kind ?
And was there euer yit so piteous cace.
I dye my sonne, I dye before thy face.

Isaac.

Away with all this feare of yours I pray.
Will you from God yit longer time me stay ?

Abraham.
Heere he intendeth to stryke him.

Alas who euer yit so stowt a mind
Within so weake a bodie erst did find ?
Alas my sonne I prey thee me forgiue
Thy death. It kills me that thou may not liue.



The Angell.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

My God heere I am.

Angell.

Into the sheath put up thy knife,
And see thou doe not take his life,
Nor hurt the child in any wyse.
For now I see before mine eyes,
What loue thou bearest to the Lord,
And honor unto him auord,
In that thou doost so willingly
Thy sonne thus offer euen to dye.

Abraham.

O God.

Isaac.

O God.

Abraham.

O Lord a man may see.

Heere he takes the sheepe.

How good it is obedient for to bee
To thee : the cace is fitly furnished.
I will go take him tyed by the head.

Angell.

O Abraham.

Abraham.

Lord heere I am.

Angell.

Thus sayth the Lord, I promis thee
By my eternall maiestie,
And by my Godhead : sith that thow
Hast shewed thy self so willing now,
Me to obey, as to forbeare
Thine only Isaks life : I sweare,
That mawgre Satan to his face,
I will thee blisse and all thy race.
Considrest thou the lightsom skye,
And on the shore the grauell drye ?
I will increace thyne offspring more,
Than starres in heauen, or sand on shore.
Their enmies they shall ouercome,
And of thy bodie one shall come,
By whom my blissing shall spred foorth
On all the nations of the earth.
By him the treasures of my loue
And mightie power, shall from aboue
Be sheaded downe on all mankind,
Bycause thou hast obeyd my mind.

THE CONCLVSION.

SEE *here the mightie power of earnest faith,*
And what reward the trew obedience payth
VVherfore ye Lords & Ladies I you pray,
VVhen you from hence shall go agein away,

Let not this trew and noble storie part
Out of the mind and tables of your hart.
It is no lye, it is no peynted tale,
It is no feyned iest nor fable stale.
It is a deede, a deede right trew, of one
That was Gods faithfull seruant long agone.
VVherefore ye maisters and ye mistresses,
Ye Lords and Ladies all both more and lesse,
Ye rich and poore, ye sorie and ye sad,
And you also whose harts with mirth are glad,
Behold, and looke upon your selues ech one,
In this so fayre example heere foregone.
Such are trew glasses, shewing to our sight,
The fayre, the fowle, the crooked, and the right.
For whoso doth unfeynedly indeuer
(As Abraham) to keepe Gods sayings euer,
And (notwithstanding all the reasons which
His mind alledgeth backward him to twich)
Doth still referre him selfe and all his deedes
To God: with much more happy yssue speeds,
Than he can wish: for come there stormes or winds,
Come greef, come death, come cares of sundry kinds,
Let earthquake come, let heauen & skyes downe fall;
Let dark confuzion ouercouer all:
The faithfull hart so stedfastly is grownded,
As it abideth euer unconfownded.
Contrariwise the man that trusteth too

THE CONCLUSION

His owne selfwit, therafter for to doe,
And standeth in his owne conceyt shall find,
[35.] *The more he goes, the more he comes behind.*
And euery litle puffe and sodein blast
From his right course shal quite & cleane him cast
Agein, his owne selfwilled nature will
Him ouerthrowe and all his dooings spill.
[40.] *Now thou great God which makest us to knowe*
The great abuses which doo plainly showe
The wretched world to be peruerted quite,
Make all of us to take such warning by'te,
As ech of us may fare the better by
[45.] *The liuely faith set foorth before our eye*
In Abraham that holy personage,
VVhose dooings haue bin playd upon this stage.
Lo maisters heere the happie recompence
VVhich God doth giue you for your gentle silence.

FINIS.

ALL PRAYSE AND THANKS BEE GIUEN
TO GOD. AMEN.

NOTES

NOTES.

To the Readers.

"It is now a two yeares," etc. Beza's conversion to Protestantism took place in 1548. A few months after the publication of his *Juvenilia* he suffered a severe illness, and on recovering he decided to give up all his brilliant prospects in France in order to go to Geneva, where he might enjoy religious freedom, and where he was to become one of the most famous of the leaders of French Protestantism.

"there came a desire vppon me," etc. It was while the first bitterness of exile and of loneliness was strong upon him that he felt the analogy between his fate and that of Abraham who had also suffered much,

Depuis le temps que tu m'as retiré
Hors du pays où tu n'est adoré,

but who was also conscious of the many blessings which God had showered upon him. The actual prompting to composition may be ascribed to this feeling, to Beza's desire to write a didactic play which should be acted by his students at Lausanne, and to his natural literary instinct, rather than to the more conventional reasons which are here alleged—and, indeed, Beza confesses this in part in the next sentence.

"it greueth me right sore," etc. Beza here refers to his *Juvenilia*, published in 1548, a volume of verses almost all of which were written before he was twenty years of age, and which had circulated for some years in manuscript among his friends. They consisted of imitations of Catullus, Ovid and Virgil, and although Beza condemned them in unmeasured terms in his later life they are not really very objectionable. At the time of their publication no one, not even Beza himself, felt that the poems were open to criticism, as is shown by the fact that the young author dedicated the volume to Melchior Wolmar, the eminent scholar in whose school at Orleans both Beza and Calvin had been students. Before accepting the professorship of Greek in the Academy of Lausanne a few months after his conversion (1549) Beza publicly made con-

fession of his sin in having written the *Juvenilia*, and called the attention of the ecclesiastical council to the book. Indeed it was only on the earnest solicitation of Calvin that he accepted the office, so conscious was he of the degree to which his youthful Muse had compromised his standing as a leader in the Reformed Church.

Beza's misgivings were well grounded, for this volume provided his enemies with their strongest argument in their attempt to malign his character and his work. During his lifetime the most bitter of these attacks was made by Hieronymus Bolsec in his *Historia de vita, moribus, doctrina et rebus gestis Theod. Beza*, etc., which was published in 1582 together with extracts from the *Juvenilia* [Brit. Mus., 1193.h.30.(10)]. In 1577 Bolsec had published at Lyons a similar attack on Calvin. This volume was republished at Lyons as late as 1875, 'avec une introduction, des extraits de la vie de Th. de Bèze, par le même, & des notes d'appui,' by M. Louis-François Chastel, Magistrat. That the evil men have done lives after them is illustrated by the following extract from the Introduction. . . . . "le libertinage à double fin, les débauches même séniles de de Bèze, l'opinion que l'on doit avoir de ses écrits poétiques ou religieux, de ses sermons, de ses perfidies, de ses persécutions contre ses contradicteurs, de ses provocations à des révoltes dont il se tenait par prudence personnellement éloigné, nous avouons que nous avons trouvé ces détails trop dégoûtants ou trop peu intéressants pour les mettre sous les yeux de nos lecteurs. De Bèze est d'ailleurs un personnage trop secondaire pour qu'on s'en occupe longtemps." (*Brit. Mus.* 4867.f.4.p.XVI.)

A copy of the *Juvenilia* is preserved in the Bodleian Library, the sub-title of which reads *Poemata amatoria ab ipso adolescente edita et ab ipso post damnata. 1548.*

"the translating of the Psalmes." Marot had begun the work in 1533 when he published a French translation of the sixth psalm. Twelve others from his pen appeared in 1539, a collection of thirty in 1541, and finally a complete collection of fifty in 1543. His death in the following year cut short his work, and Beza's continuation of the task—"que i'ay

maintenant en main"—bore fruit in 1551, about a year after the publication of *Le Sacrifice d'Abraham*. This edition contained thirty-four of the psalms. In 1552 he republished these, together with forty-nine of those contained in Marot's collection. The remaining sixty-seven did not appear until 1562, in which year at least twenty-five editions were published of the complete translation of the Psalter—a record far surpassing that of any other book of the time. *Les Pseavmes de David, mis en rime Françoise, par Clement Marot et Theodore de Bèze* has maintained its position as the generally accepted French Psalter even to the present day. To the edition of 1552 Beza prefaced an epistle 'À l'eglise de nostre Seigneur,' in which he urges 'good wits' to give themselves to similar holy tasks—in language bearing close resemblance to that which he had used in the preface we are considering, *e.g.*:

" Sus donc esprits de celeste origine,
Monstrez ici vostre fureur Diuine :
Et cette grace autant peu imitable
Au peuple bas, qu'aux plus grands admirable,
Soient desormais vos plumes addonnées
A louer Dieu, qui les vous a données," etc.

(*Les Pseavmes de David*, Paris, 1642.)

The first English version of the French psalter was that published by Arthur Golding in 1571, together with Calvin's *Commentaries on the Psalms*. A second edition appeared in 1576. Another English translation, the work of Anthony Gilby, was published in 1581, and two more editions of this second version followed in 1590. In the Bodleian Library there are copies of all three editions of Gilby's translation.

"And woulde God that the great number of good witts which I know in Fraunce," etc. It is hardly possible that the succeeding lines were not inspired by Beza's opposition to some of the theories promulgated in Joachim du Bellay's *Defense et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*. This famous book had appeared about eighteen months before Beza wrote the preface to *Le Sacrifice d'Abraham*, and had occasioned a storm of criticism. That Beza, the young poet and accomplished classical scholar, should be in touch with contem-

porary literary theories would seem certain on *a priori* grounds. The *Quintil Horatian*, a celebrated pamphlet attacking Du Bellay's work, had appeared in this very year, 1550, from the pen of another of Wolmar's old students—Barthélemy Aneau, who was at this time professor of rhetoric and principal of the college at Lyons. Beza's preface distinctly suggests to us the author's interest in the discussion of these vital questions, and his intellectual sympathy with the "bons esprits que ie cognoy en France," in spite of his own religious preoccupation. In the *Defense et Illustration* the author is rather contemptuous of much that French literature has as yet produced, "comme rondeaux, ballades, virelais, chants royaux, chansons et autres telles espiceries, qui corrompent le goust de nostre langue et ne servent sinon à porter tesmoignage de notre ignorance" (p. 30). Nevertheless he has unbounded faith in the possibilities of the language. . . . "j'ay toujours estimé nostre poësie françoise estre capable de quelque plus haut et meilleur stile que celuy dont nous sommes si longuement contentez" (p. 26), and in an address to the 'lecteur studieux de la langue françoise,' he declares : "[je] ne te puis mieux persuader d'y escrire, qu'en te montrant le moyen de *l'enrichir* et illustrer, qui est l'imitation des Grecs et Romains" (p. 28). The whole work is an amplification of this statement. In writing the strictures contained in this address to the reader Beza seems to have had in mind especially the fourth chapter of the second book of the *Defense et Illustration*, the title of which is *Quels Genres de Poèmes doit élire le Poète François*. To the 'poëte futur' Du Bellay addresses, among others, the following counsels : "Jette-toy à ces *plaisans epigrammes*, non point comme font aujourd'huy un tas de faiseurs de comtes nouveaux . . . mais à l'imitation d'un Martial ou de quelqu'autre bien approuvé, *si la lascivité ne te plaist*, mesle le profitable avecques le doux. *Distile* avecques un stile coulant et non scabreux, ces pitoyables elegies, à l'exemple d'un Ovide, d'un Tibule et d'un Properce, y entremeslant quelquefois de ces fables anciennes. . . . Si tu ne voulois, à l'exemple des anciens, en vers heroiques . . sous le nom de *satyre* . . . . taxer modestement les vices de ton temps. Tu as pour cecy Horace, qui selon Quintilian,

tient le premier lieu entre les satyriques. Sonne-moy ces beaux *sonnets* non moins docte que plaisante invention italienne . . . . Pour le sonnet doncques tu as *Petrarque* et quelques modernes Italiens" (p. 30). In the sixth chapter of the second book—*D'Inventer des Mots*, etc., the author declares . . . . "je veux bien avertir celuy qui entre-prendra un grand oeuvre, *qu'il ne craigne point d'inventer, adopter et composer à l'imitation des Grecs, quelques mots françois* comme Ciceron se vante d'avoir fait en sa langue" (p.33). In these extracts I have italicized the words and phrases to which, it would seem, Beza refers directly.

In working over the material of a mystery play into an approximation to the form of a Greek drama, however, Beza follows the injunctions of Du Bellay : "Quant aux comedies et tragedies, si les roys et les republiques les vouloient restituer en leur ancienne dignité, qu'ont usurpée les farces et moralités je seroy bien d'opinion que tu t'y employasses, et si tu le veux faire pour l'ornement de ta langue, tu sçais où tu en dois trouver les archetypes" (p. 31). (J. Du Bellay, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Léon Séché, Paris, 1903, Tome i.)

It may be added that Arthur Golding, too, did also "desyre too enryche [his] native language with thinges not hertoofore published in the same." (V. prose dedication to Leicester of the first four books of the *Metamorphoses* (1564); v. also his stanzas prefixed to Baret's *Alvearie* which are quoted in the introduction.)

"thinges which beare the readers on hande," etc, *i.e.* deceive by false pretences. Cf.

"How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,
Who wrought with them," etc.

Macbeth, III, i, 80-81.

"two-edged epigrams," etc. A reference to the *Juvenilia*. The volume contained "vier Sylven, zwölf Elegien, viele Epitaphien und dann nehmen die Epigramme fast die letzte Hälfte des Buches ein." (Baum, *Theodor Beza*, vol i, p. 69.) For an analysis of the contents of the *Juvenilia* see pages 69-81. Baum reprints several of the pieces (pp. 93-102). His judgment of the volume is summed up in the following sentence :

"Wer Sinn für Poesie hat wird Beza und Wolmarn danken dasz sie uns diese mannichfaltigen, in üppiger Natürlichkeit ausgeschossenen Jugenderzeugnisse nicht vorenthalten haben" (p. 80).

"I thought best to name it a tragedie." This statement illustrates the vagueness of the term "comedy" and "tragedy" throughout the Middle Ages. They did not even refer specifically to the drama, and the distinction between them had to do more frequently with considerations of style or the character of the ending than with the predominance of the more serious or lighter matter. In dedicating the *Paradiso* to Can Grande della Scala, Dante gives his reasons for calling his great epic a comedy : "Ed è la Commedia un certo genere di poetica narrazione, diverso da ogni altro. Quanto alla materia, differisce dalla tragedia, perchè questa in principio è ammirabile e quieta, nel fino od esito sozza ed orribile. . . . Laddove la Commedia incomincia con alcun che di avverso, ma termina felicemente. . . . Parimente la Tragedia e la Commedia tengono differente modo nel parlare : l'una, alto e sublime; l'altra, dimesso e umile . . . ." (*La Divina Commedia* ed. Camerini, Milano, 1893, p. 20.) Chaucer's definition of tragedy is, "Tragedye is to seyn a dite of a prosperite for a tyme that endeth in wrecchidnesse." (*Boece*, Bk. II, Prosa ii, Glose.) A distinction similar to that of Dante is given in the *Catholicon* of Johannes Januensis (1286) : "differunt tragoedia et comoedia, quia comedia privatorum hominum continet facta, tragoedia regum et magnatum. Item comoedia humili stilo describitur tragoedia alto. Item comoedia a tristibus incipit sed cum laetio desinit, tragoedia e contrario." (Quoted by Chambers in *The Mediæval Stage*, II, 209.) See also Cloetta, *Beiträge zur Litteraturgeschichte des Mittelalters*, I, s. 140-4.

In the prologue to the *Amphitryon* of Plautus there is a discussion as to whether the play is to be a comedy or a tragedy and it is assumed that the question is to be decided by the worldly dignity of the *dramatis personæ :* since a servant is to be introduced besides the kings and gods who are the chief characters the author decides to call the play a tragi-comedy. Another point of resemblance between this prologue and Beza's

may be mentioned here : in both great profit is promised to the audience if they will but preserve silence during the presentation of the play.

"I passed so little," etc., *i.e.* I cared so little. Cf. "I will not greatly care, or passe, whether they beleeue, or no. Haud in magno ponam discrimine."

Baret's *Alvearie* s.v.

"I pass not for his threats."

Tamburlaine, Part I, i.

"I pass not for thy anger."

Edward II, I, iv.

"I report me to Aristophanes," etc. Beza probably refers to *The Frogs* ll. 907+. For the reflexive use of the verb 'report,' see the *Century Dictionary*, s.v. 6+. Cf. also,

"As for the common sort of Ballads which now are used in the world I report me to every good man's conscience, what wicked fruits they bring." *The Gude and Godlie Ballates*, 1573, ed. Laing, Preface.

"As touching the ortographie," etc. Beza here refers to the devotees of spelling reform in France, the chief of whom were Jacques Peletier and Louys Maigret. In the *Defense et Illustration* Du Bellay has only a passing and non-commital reference to the subject—"si l'orthographe françoise n'eust point été depravée par les praticiens." In his preface to the second edition of *L'Olive* (1550) he says : "C'est encor' la raison pourquoy j'ay si peu curieusement regardé à l'orthographe, la voyant aujourd'huy aussi diverse qu'il y a de sorte d'escrivains. J'approuve et loue grandement les raisons de ceux qui l'ont voulu reformer; mais voyant que telle nouveauté desplaist autant aux doctes comme aux indoctes, j'aime beaucoup mieux louer leur intention que la suyvre." (*Oeuvres* Tome I, p. 96). Du Bellay's well-known friendship for Peletier would naturally dispose him to look kindly on the new theories. Ronsard had announced in the "Avertissement" to his *Odes*, which were published in the same year (1550), his determination to follow to a great extent the principles laid down by Maigret. As this work was the first of those written in confessed conformity to the doctrines of the Pléiade, the

author's attitude to the new theories regarding spelling reform would have the effect of identifying the Pléiade with the movement. It is quite possible, if not probable, that Beza wrote the criticisms we are considering when he was fresh from a perusal of Du Bellay's or Ronsard's preface. The similarity of Beza's language to that of Du Bellay quoted in the extract given above is at least worthy of attention.

The question of spelling reform was one of general concern in the sixteenth century. An interesting reference to the anomalies which Englishmen felt existed in the preservation of an orthography which no longer corresponded to the pronunciation of the language is found in Baret's *Alvearie* (1580) under the letter E : "Then must both we and many other nations, geld out many idle dumme E, ees, especially in the latter end of our wordes, (As glasse, rodde, etc.) which signifie nothing . . . This one rule therefore being well weighed, and the similitude diligently marked, will suffice to mend a great deale of our corrupt writing, and reduce it againe to true Orthographie. . . . . For surely, we may still wonder & find fault with our Orthographie (or rather Cacographie in deed :) but it is impossible (in mine opinion) for any private man to amend it, untill the learned Universities haue determined upon the truth thereof, & after the Prince also with the noble Councell, ratified and confirmed the same, to be publikely taught and used in the Realme."

Camden in his *Remains concerning Britain* refers to contemporary orthography and the efforts that have been made to improve it, but "that Tyrant Custome," he admits, makes any reform difficult (pp.36+).

"they should first learn to pronounce." Beza was much interested in the question of pronunciation. In 1584 he published at Geneva *De Francicae linguae recta pronunciatione tractatus*, now one of the rarest of his works (a copy is in the Bodleian), but accessible in a reprint (Paris, 1868, 12mo.). In 1580 and 1587 he published short treatises on the pronunciation of Latin and Greek. A copy of the latter is preserved in the Bodleian in a small octavo volume the title of which is *De vera pronuntiatione Gr. et Latinae linguae, commentarii*

doctiss. virorum. Quorum primus qui est De pronuntiatione Graecae linguae Theod. Bezam autorem habet.

The Argument.

" . . . . take thyne onely sonne out of hande," *i.e.* immediately. Cf.

. . . . "also [he] told me he intended to print it out of hand."
Preface to Baret's *Alvearie.*

and

"But gather we our forces out of hand
And set upon our boasting enemy."
Henry VI, Part I, IV., ii, 102.

The Prologue.

Line 4. "such preace," *i.e.* crowd. A common enough Elizabethan usage frequently met in Golding. Cf.

" . . .. Within the courts is preace
Of common people."

(Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* Bk. XII, l. 56. Reprinted by the De La More Press, London, 1904, W.H.D.Rouse ed.)

Line 9. "alonly." The form is also used in lines 17 of the Prologue and 74 and 88 of the regular text of the play, as well as in others of Golding's works. Cf., *e.g.* the *Metamorphoses,* Bk. XI, 286; Bk. XII, 96. Nares derives it from "alone," V. *Glossary,* s. v., but the New English Dictionary says it is a combination of "all" and "only," and that it was therefore originally an emphatic form of "only." *Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary* gives this derivation also. It is certainly used in this sense whenever it occurs in the present play. The corresponding adjective form is also used : "There lives the phœnix one alone bird ever." Marlowe, *Ovid's Elegies,* Book II, Elegia VI. The Scottish form is " allanerlie." Cf. "We trow in God allanerlie." *The Gude and Godlie Ballates* (1573) ed. Laing, p. 9. Cf. also

"Except thow weschin be,
With Christis blude allanerlie,
Thow art condampnit man." *Ibid,* p. 148.

The form became obsolete in the seventeenth century.

Line 10. "VVhat weene you," etc. "Ween, to fancy, to hope (erroneously)." Schmidt, *Shakespeare-Lexicon*, s.v.

Cf. "They that be in Hell ween there is no other Heaven."
Camden's *Proverbs* in *Remains*, p. 334.

Line 11. "VVe nother can nor will away with that," *i.e.* endure that. Cf. "Away with, as when wee can not away with one, or with such fashions as he useth." Baret, *op. cit.* s.v.

"She could never away with me."
Henry IV, Part II, III, ii, 213.

Line 21. "to be in place," *i.e.* present. Cf.

"And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon."
Measure for Measure, V, 504.

Line 23. "For Lausan is not here." For similar juggling as to the scene of the play compare the Prologue to the *Truculentus* of Plautus.

Line 27. "As now this is the land of Palestine." The redundant "as" before expressions of time is common in many Elizabethan writers. V. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar*, 114. For 'the land of Palestine' Beza wrote 'le pays des Philistins.' Cf. "The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina."
Exodus, chap. XV, 14.

Cf. also

"A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day."
Samson Agonistes, 1,144.

Line 52. "grave and wondrous geere." The use of 'geere' in the indefinite sense of "business" or "matter" was very common. Cf. "I am sore afraid how this matter will fall out, or what will be the end of this geare."
Baret's *op. cit.* s.v. "fall."

"And that these covenantes may never be broken, but stand or hold forever; or for the better assuring, or making sure, and confirming of this geare." *Ibid* s.v. "hold." (543).

Line 53. "And that we will his ears to him restore," etc. A similar witticism occurs in the prologue to the *Casina* of Plautus where the attention of the audience is requested if their ears are disengaged.

Abraham's Sacrifice.

Line 19. "fee"—"Goods, possessions, wealth." V. *New Eng. Dict.* s.v. 2.

Line 35. Here, and in line 44, "benefits" is a dissyllabic word, but in line 6 it is trisyllabic as also in line 110.

Line 39. "Spoken but in boord," *i.e.* jest. Cf.

> Sumtyme with pleasaunt boords
> And wanton toyes he dalyingly dooth cast foorth amorous woords." *Metamorphoses*, Bk. X, 279.

Cf. also the Scotch "baur." "Soth bourde is no bourde" is a very old saying (it is in Heywood's *Proverbs*, ed. Sharman, p. 150), which has persisted until modern times in Scotland. Cf. "A sooth boord is no boord." *Quentin Durward*, Abbotsford edition, p. 256.

"The sooth bourd is nae bourd." *Redgauntlet*, The Scott Society, p. 293.

See an interesting note in Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary* s.v. on "The Bourd of Brechen." Chambers refers to a Dutch "Boerd," or farce about 1400. V. *The Mediaeval Stage*, Vol. II, p. 150.

Line 50. In this speech Abraham uses the familiar 'thou' in addressing Sara ; elsewhere he always uses 'you'—probably because of the greater solemnity of the succeeding scenes. Sara, the reverential wife, who remembers that "therefore hath God ordeyned me" always uses 'you' in addressing Abraham. In speaking to his parents Isaac uses 'you' except in his apostrophe to his absent mother.

> "Alas poore mother mine.
> How many deathes shall my death giue to thee?
> (ll.833-4.)

where the passionate exaltation of the speech explains the usage.

Line 50. "thy mind I well allow." "to Alowe : to make good or allowable : to declare to be true."

> Approbo . . . . *appouuer* [sic] *du tout, trouuer bon.*
> No man better esteemed or alowed of his countrie men.
> To alowe. approbare & laudare. Cic.
> (Baret *op. cit.* s. v.)

"to praise, commend, approve of." *New Eng. Dict.* s.v.

Cf. "O heavens,
If you do love old men; if your sweet sway
Allow obedience." *Lear*, II, iv, 192-4.

and "He understanding not hir thought, did well her woorde allow." *Metamorphoses*, X, 41[illegible].

Line 76. "in space so mayne." "Mayne" or "main" means "vast in extent." Cf. "The large mayne poole of water neere at hand." *Metamorphoses*, XI, 411.

Line 91. "throughouts." The form would seem to be an arbitrary one coined for the sake of the rhyme.

Line 122. "Now tremble you, ye wicked wights." An example of the regular change from "you" to "ye" in direct, and especially in impassioned, address. Cf. line 3 of the Conclusion. Cf. also

"Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong."
Julius Cæsar I, iii, 91.

Line 142. "A new-made vessell," etc. The proverb is quoted in Hazlitt's *English Proverbs*, p. 375, in the form, "The cask savours of the first fill." Hazlitt adds: "See a note by Weber in Dyce's *Beaumont and Fletcher*, IV. 462. The following apposite passage from Horace is quoted *ibidem :*

"Quô semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem
Testa diu."

Line 157. "That mislikes not God." Cf. also line 240. "to Displease; to mislike." Baret's *Alvearie* s.v. "displease." This somewhat rare impersonal use of the verb became obsolete in the seventeenth century. Cf. "All they would do was to allow Mr. Bruce to come out if he heard anything that misliked him." Bruce, *Sermons* (1631) 69, ed. 1843 : (Quoted in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*, s.v.) Shakespeare uses "likes" very frequently impersonally, *e.g.* "This likes me well," *Hamlet* V, ii, 249, but "mislikes" only in a personal sense, *e.g.* "Mislike me not for my complexion," *Merchant of Venice* II, i, 1. This personal use of "mislike" is very common in Elizabethan authors.

Line 165. "I did make the godds." The belief that the heathen deities were originally the angels who had rebelled with Satan was general in the Middle Ages, and prevailed until

comparatively modern times. Hooker tells us that "These wicked spirits [*i.e.* the fallen angels] the heathens honoured instead of gods, both generally under the name of *dii inferi*, 'gods infernal'; and particularly some in oracles, some in idols, some as household gods, some as nymphs." *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. I, chap. iv, 3. Milton also accepts the theory:

"Then were they [*i.e.* the fallen angels] known to men by various names,
And various idols through the Heathen World."
Paradise Lost, Bk. I, ll, 374-5.

Line 171. "brazell redd." "Brazell' is a variant of 'brazil'—"of unknown origin; perh. a corruption of an Oriental name of the dye-wood originally so called. On the discovery of an allied species, also yielding a dye, in South America, the territory where it grew was called *terra de brasil*, 'red-dye-wood land,' afterwards abbreviated to Brasil, 'Brazil.' Brazil-wood was thus not named from the country, but the converse was the case. Formerly pronounced in English *bra.zil* as shown by rimes and spellings." *New Eng. Dict.* s. v. The present case is an instance of the word's being accented on the first syllable.

Lines 174-5. Cf. also lines 526-7—

"Nothing ye can so perfect have,
But alwaies sumwhat is amisse."

Similar ideas very frequently find expression in Elizabethan literature. Perhaps the most famous example is that which occurs in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* V, ii, beginning "If all the pens that ever poets held," etc.

Line 181. "the kind," *i.e.* nature, as usually in Middle English.

Line 186. "on mowld." Cf. also ll. 595 and 629. A Middle English word meaning earth. Cf.:

"Certes thanne schulde I be fryke
And a mery man on molde."
The Castell of Perseverance, ll, 153-4, ed. Pollard.

Cf. also "She did not live above the molde," etc.
Metamorphoses, I, 725.

and "*Homo*, for that he was made of mold."

Camden, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Line 192. "rife." "Currently; commonly; frequently."

V. *Cent. Dict.*, s.v. 3.

Line 202. "Euen I my selfe the wretched world shall rew." V. also lines 305-8. Cf. Milton's Satan :

"yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied."

Paradise Lost, Bk. IV, ll. 373-5.

and again,

"And, should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just—
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new World—compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor."

Ibid. IV, ll. 388-393.

Line 212. "hold such tack." "To hold tack—to keep one at bay." *Nares*, s. v., where the following passage is quoted :

"They hew his armour peece-meale from his backe,
Yet still the valiant prince maintaines the fray,
Though but halfe-harnest, yet he holds them tacke."

Heywood's *Troia Britanica*, 1609.

Line 230. "there is a ragged rowt
Of sillie shepherds, nother skild nor stowt."

This inevitably suggests "the rakehellye route of our ragged rymers" mentioned by E.K. in his Epistle to Mayster Gabriell Harvey prefaced to the *Shepheards Calendar* (Globe edition, p. 442).

Line 235. "their greatest Clarke." Cf.:

"The greatest Clerkes be not the wisest men."

The Proverbs of John Heywood, ed. Sharman, p. 115.

The same proverb is quoted by Camden, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

Line 251. "Isaac" is here used as a trisyllabic word. Cf. also ll. 494, 706, 782, 820, 821. More frequently it is dissyllabic as in ll. 657, 688, etc.

Line 252. "which hight the myrrh of God." In Genesis the place is referred to as 'the land of Moriah,' and the hill

has been doubtfully identified by tradition with that on which Solomon's Temple was built in Jerusalem. The A. B. and C. versions of *Le Viel Testament* read simply " dessus les montaignes," and "une montaigne, Dessus la quelle," etc., in the command of God to the angel and the angel's command to Abraham respectively. The E. and F. versions both read "au mont de Vision" and "la terre de Vision" in the corresponding passages, following the Vulgate version,—"Vade in terram visionis." (The York, Towneley and Brome plays also mention the land of Vision.) The Vulgate interpretation is based on the Hebrew forms *Mar'ê* (Vision) > *mārê* > vulgarly *maure*, and *Yah* < *Yahwê* (Jehovah) = Maureyah. Beza has preferred to derive the form from Hebrew *mōr* < *murr* > μυρρο and *Yah* < *Y*ahwè = Moryah = Moriah. Beza's opinion of the Vulgate is well known, and his contempt was evidenced by the fact that he himself translated the New Testament into Latin. For half a century before his death he enjoyed a very high reputation both as a Hebrew and a classical scholar. The esteem in which he was held among contemporary English theologians is shown by a glance at such a work as Fulke's *Defence of the English Translations of the Bible* (Parker Society, *passim*).

Line 271. "We hie us packing on a row." "*To go packing*, to go away about one's business. *Var. dial.*" (*Halliwell.*) Cf.

"Make speede to flee : be packing and awaie. Maturate fugam. Virg." (*Baret*, s.v. "packe") Cf. also

"When we would be rid of one, we use to say, 'Be going, trudge, pack, be faring, hence away, shift.'"

Camden, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

"on a row," *i.e.* one after the other,—often used jocosely. Cf. "In jolly ruffe he passed streyght from him
Too *Coryt*, and Enagrus, and too Dryant on a rowe."

Metamorphoses, XII, 319.

" Where Prophets, 'Postles, and just folk,
With Martyrs on a row do walk,—
The Angels sweetly caroling."

The Gude and Godlie Ballates, (L. IX).

Lines 276-7. The Elizabethan confusion between the use of "you "and "ye" is illustrated in Isaac's speeches addressed to the shepherds : Cf.

"Will ye leave me . . . . ?" (11. 276-7). "And doe ye thinke . . . . ?" (l. 290.) "But will ye stay . . . . ?" (l.298). "As you doe know . . . . ?" (l. 384).

The confusion cannot be explained by any considerations regarding accented and light words, or ordinary and impassioned speech, although conformably to Elizabethan usage, "ye" is restricted to interrogations. In the accusative "you" is always used. The shepherds in addressing Abraham and Isaac always use "you" except in line 284:

"And then ye shall perceiue the charge."

Here "ye" is used probably to avoid repeating "you" from the preceding line, and because it is more euphonious for the unaccented syllable. Abraham addresses the shepherds as "you" except in ll. 500-501, where the use of "ye" may be attributed to the sudden exaltation of the style.

Line 283. "and proue a pace," *i.e.* thrive. The word which also means "to be with young" is generally applied to cattle, and is therefore especially appropriate in the speech of the shepherds.

Line 287. "that lye in stale." Nares says, "To lie in stale meant to lie in wait, or ambush, for any purpose," and quotes :

"This find I true, for as I lay in stale,
To fight with the Duke Richard's eldest son,
I was destroy'd, not far from Dintingdale."

Mirr. Mag. p. 366.

Cf. "The unjust judge for bribes becomes a stale."

Marlowe's *Ovid's Elegies*, Book I, Elegia X.

where "stale" means "bait" or "decoy."

Line 293. "of honest kind," *i.e.* nature.

Line 305. "which looke aboue the skies." Cf., the obsolete expression "to look aloft" which means "to aspire," "be ambitious." V. *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. "look," 28.

"Look not too high, lest a chip fall into thine eye."

Camden's *Proverbs*, in *Remains*, p. 327.

Line 338. "so good plight." Cf. also line 435, "in better plight." The use of 'plight' in the sense of 'state' or 'condition' was general in Middle English, and was common in Shakespeare's day. Cf. "I think myself in better plight for a leader than you are." *Merry Wives of Windsor*, II, ii, 172. Cf. also

"(Achilles) lives still in healthfull plyght."
Metamorphoses, XII, 654.

Line 350. "this conceit." Probably used here in the sense of "trick" : V. *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. 8 b, where the following illustrative quotations are given : "A pretie conceyt that happened in this gathering" (*Grafton Chron.* II, 719), and "Practise some pleasant conceipt vpon thy poore patient" (Lyly, *Euphues*, ed. Arb., 67).

Lines 367-9. The translation is very awkward, but a reference to the original makes the meaning quite clear.

Line 415. In the original a printer's error makes this line read as follows : "If he should dyeth, ẽ farewel our good dayes.'

Line 440. "See that your cariages be prest." Cf. ll. 623 and 848. 'Prest' means 'ready'—a common Elizabethan usage. Cf. "So prest are we." *Tamburlaine*, Part II, Act I, Sc. i., and, "Who warn me of such danger prest at hand."
Dido, Queen of Carthage, Act III, Sc. ii.

Line 447. The tendency to drop final -en has been strengthened in this case by the necessity for a rhyme.

Line 459. "to gad";—"To go wandering in desire or thought; to leave the path. Now *rare*." (*New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. 2). "to Gadde, and iet up and downe, &c. Volitare, & vagari in foro. Cicer. Hac illac itare & circumcursare." *Baret* s.v. Cf.

"And millions both of trothes and lyes ronne gadding every where." *Metamorphoses*, XII, 58.

Line 462. "on a rore." "Rore (2) Trouble, stir, noise. Hence perhaps, the name of *Roaring-boys*." *Halliwell.* Cf.

"The zhore
And zea is staynd with blood, and all the ven is on a rore."
Metamorphoses, XI, 431.

Line 482. "set forth the better foote." Still a common proverbial expression. Cf.

"Nay, but make haste; the better foot before."
King John, IV, ii, 170.

"And with the better foote before the fleeing Nymph to chace." *Metamorphoses*, I, 648.

Line 483. "some cunning drift." *i.e.* scheme or plot. Cf.

"I will so plead
That you shall say my cunning drift excels."
Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, ii, 83.

and

"That drifte by the Queene not vnwiselye deuised."
Sir T. More, *Richard III* (Works, p. 40, col. i.). (Quoted in Notes to *Hamlet*, Clark and Wright, eds., II, ii, 11).

"The Gods, defenders of the innocent
Will neuer prosper your intended drifts."
Tamburlaine, Part I, I, ii.

Line 502. "ywus." This form of the adverb is used elsewhere by Golding for the sake of the rhyme. Cf.

"but (he) sayde unto him thus.
No marvell though thou be so proude and full of wordes ywus."
Metamorphoses, I, 949.

In the present case Abraham's sentence is broken into two parts by the speech of the shepherds.

Line 504. "God be wy." One of the many contracted forms of 'God be with you (or ye).' Among the variants given in the *New English Dictionary* there is none exactly like that of our text, the nearest approach to it being 'God b'wy' and 'God be wy you.'

Line 511. "It were no reason." Cf. "It is good reason." (l. 618) and "it is good right" (l. 695). V. *New Eng. Dict.* s.v., 14.a., where the following example is given : "It is good reason to sowe timely in wette groundes." (B. Googe *Heresbach's Husb.* 1. (1586) 25 b.) Cf. also

"It is no reason that he, etc."
"Whom you (as meete and reason was) resisted. *Quibus* tu (ut par erat) restitisti." *Baret, s.v.*

Line 513. "maisterward." "-Ward or -Wards. As a termination, implying *towards* was often arbitrarily added to any other word, as to *us-ward*, to *God-ward*, etc., in the authorized version of the Bible." Nares, *Glossary*, s.v.

Golding in his translation of the *Metamorphoses* uses "Godward" (XII, 171), and "seaward" (VII, 1054). V. a note by Rolfe in his edition of *Coriolanus* on "to bedward" (I, vi, 32).

Line 521. "zuunes." The dialectic form is used as appropriate to the shepherds. Cf. the speech of the herdsman, Anætor the Phocayan, in Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* (XI,ll.409-435), where initial "s" is always written "z." (A quotation from this speech is given in the note to line 462, above.) Edgar in addressing Oswald also changes s's to z's (V. *Lear* IV, vi, 211+).

Line 533. "howge." Golding uses this form interchangeably with "huge."

Line 550. "Halfe-fast," *i.e.* half-faced, or partially hidden by the clouds. Cf.

> "whose hopeful colours
> Advance our half-faced sun, striving to shine."
> *Henry VI, Part II*, IV, i, 98.

Line 551. "fulsom." V. *New Eng. Dict.* s.v.i, where the following quotation is given : "For alwey God gaf hyr to her presence So fulsom lyght of heuenly influence." Lydgate, *Lyfe our Ladye* (Caxton) A.v. The word was also used in its modern signification. Cf.

> "Fat love, and too much fulsome me annoys,,
> Even as sweet meat a glutted stomach cloys."
> Marlowe, *Ovid's Elegies*, Bk. II, Elegia XIX.

Line 588. "his cheefest plyght." For 'plight' see note on line 338. 'Chief' is here used in the obsolete sense of 'pre-eminent in excellence.' V. *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. 5 and 8. In line 98 "chiefest" means simply "greatest."

Line 592. "throwen along." Cf. "as he lay along under an oak." *As You Like It*, II, i, 30.
and

> "when he lies along
> After your way, his tale pronounc'd shall bury
> His reasons with his body." *Coriolanus*, V, vi, 57-59.

Line 602. Both the metre and sense would be improved by reading

"Is for too drawen us ech one asyde."

Golding uses the old forms of the infinitive elsewhere in the play, e.g. "to doone" (L500) and "to sayne" (L690); in the *Metamorphoses* I have found "to beene" and "to gone"—always, however, for the sake of the rhyme. At any rate the line is evidently imperfect.

Line 619. "I will ech thing addresse." "Address. To prepare for anything; to get ready. Fr. A very common use of the word in our old dramatists." *Halliwell*, s.v.

Line 652. "the falling out," *i.e.* fulfillment. V. *New Eng. Dict.* s.v. "fall," 93, g., where the meaning of 'fall out' is given as 'come to pass.' V. also quotation from Baret's *Alvearie* in the note on line 52.

Line 670. "He hath kept towche." "To keep touch. To be faithful, to be exact to an appointment." Nares, *Glossary*, s.v. "keep."

Line 680. "this hagards mind." Cf. "O false old hag" (L784). "Haggard. A wild and intractable person (at first, a female); one not to be captured. Obs." *New Eng. Dict.* s.v. 1—b. fig.

Line 684. "at a glaunce." This would seem to be a reference to the evil eye.

Line 692. "this leawd race," *i.e.* wicked course. V. *New Eng. Dict.* for the numerous meanings of this word. Baret has "Lewd, ungratious naughtie. Improbus," as one meaning, and this is the sense in which it is used in the present instance.

Line 723. "are not thou." Cf. also line 761.—"thou me drew," and line 764—"thou gave me." The regular form of the verb in the second person singular is avoided in the first and third cases for the sake of euphony, in the second case for the sake of the rhyme. V. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar*, 340.

Line 730. "deface." "To deface . . . . to kill." *Baret*, s.v.

Line 739. "dispence," *i.e.* govern. V. *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. 2.b., where the following quotation is given: "a 1633 Austin *Medit.* 106. Lest hee should not dispense and governe well."

glass-window,' Davies, ed. 1672, p. 52." *Halliwell.* The word is a favorite with Golding. The "lightsome skye" is referred to twice in the first book of the *Metamorphoses* (ll. 22 and 77), and I have noticed "the lyghtsum Lucifer" (*Ibid. XI*, 662), and the "lyghtsum Titan" (*Ibid. XI*, 293).

Conclusion.

Line 7. "it is no peynted tale." "Peynted" here means "artificial, counterfeit, unreal," as frequently in Shakespeare. V. Schmidt's *Shakespeare-Lexicon* s.v. "Paint" (4). Perhaps there is also an implied reference to the "painted cloth" pictures and emblems which are usually referred to disparagingly because of their cheapness as compared to tapestry.

Line 17. "trew glasses." Cf. such book titles as *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, *A Looking Glasse for London and England*, etc. V. an interesting note on the frequent use of such terms in English and French literature, in Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* I, p. 402. (London, 1899. 3 vols.)

APPENDIX

ABRAHAM SACRIFIANT

(REPRINTED FROM THE EDITION OF J. G. FICK, GENEVA, 1874)

ABRAHAM

SACRIFIANT,

Tragedie Françoise

PAR THEODORE DE BESZE.

GEN. XV, ROM. IIII.

Abraham a creu à Dieu, & il luy a esté reputé à iustice.

THEODORE DE BESZE

aux Lecteurs, Salut en nostre Seigneur.

IL y a enuiron deux ans, que Dieu m'a fait la grace d'abandonner le pays auquel il est persecuté, pour le seruir selon sa saincte volonté: durant lequel temps, pource qu'en mes afflictions, diuerses fantasies se sont presentées à mon esprit, i'ay eu mon recours à la parolle du Seigneur, en laquelle i'ay trouué deux choses qui m'ont merueilleusement consolé. L'vne est vne infinité de promesses, sorties de la bouche de celuy qui est la verité mesmes, & la parolle duquel est tousiours accompaignée de l'effect : l'autre est vne multitude d'exemples, desquels le moindre est suffisant non seulement pour enhardir, mais aussi pour rendre inuincibles les plus foibles & descouragés du monde. Ce que nous voyons estre auenu, si nous considerons par quels moyens la verité de Dieu a esté maintenue iusqu'icy. Mais entre tous ceux qui nous sont mis en auant pour exemple au vieil Testament, ie trouue trois personnages, ausquels il me semble que le Seigneur a voulu representer ses plus grandes merueilles, assauoir Abraham, Moyse & Dauid: en la vie desquels si on se miroit auiourdhuy, on se cognoistroit mieux qu'on ne fait. Lisant donc ces histoires sainctes auec vn merueilleux plaisir & singulier profit, il m'est pris vn desir de m'exercer à escrire en vers tels argumens, non seulement pour les mieux considerer & retenir, mais aussi pour louer Dieu en toutes sortes à moy poffibles. Car ie confesse que de mon naturel i'ay tousiours pris plaisir à la poesie, & ne m'en puis encores repentir : mais bien ay-ie regret d'auoir employé ce peu de grace que Dieu m'a donné en cest endroit, en choses desquelles la seule souuenance me fait maintenant rougir. Ie me suis doncques addonné à telles matieres plus sainctes, esperant de continuer cy apres : mesmement en la translation des Pseaumes, que i'ay maintenant en main. Que pleust à Dieu que tant de bons esprits que ie cognoy en France, en lieu de s'amuser à ces malheureuses inuentions ou imitations de fantasies vaines & deshonnestes (si on en veut iuger à la verité) regardassent plustost à magnifier la bonté de ce grand Dieu, duquel ils ont receu tant de graces, qu'à flatter leurs idoles, c'est à dire, leurs seigneurs ou leurs dames, qu'ils entretiennent en leurs vices par leurs fictions & flatteries. A la verité il leur seroit mieux seant de chanter vn cantique à Dieu, que de petrarquiser vn Sonnet, & faire l'amoureux transi, digne d'auoir vn chapperon à sonnettes : ou de contrefaire ces fureurs poetiques à l'antique, pour distiller la gloire de ce monde & immortaliser cestuy-cy

ou ceste-la : choses qui font confesser au lecteur, que les autheurs d'icelles n'ont pas seulement monté en leur mont Parnasse, mais sont paruenus iusqu'au cercle de la Lune. Les autres (du nombre desquels i'ay esté à mon tresgrand regret) aiguisent vn Epigramme trenchant à deux costez, ou piquant par le bout : les autres s'amusent à tout renuerser, plustost qu'à tourner: autres cuidans enrichir nostre langue, l'accoustrent à la Grecque & à la Romaine. Mais quoy ? dira quelcun, i'attendoye vne Tragedie, & tu nous donnes vne Satyre. Ie confesse que pensant à telles phrenesies, ie me suis moy-mesmes transporté: toutesfois ie n'entens auoir mesdict des bons esprits, mais bien voudroy-ie leur auoir descouuert si au clair l'iniure qu'ils font à Dieu, & le tort qu'ils font à euxmesmes, qu'il leur print enuie de me surmonter en la description de tels argumens, dont ie leur enuoye l'essay: comme ie say qu'il leur sera bien aisé, fi le moindre d'eux s'y veut employer. Or pour venir à l'argument que ie traite, il tient de la Tragedie & de la Comedie: & pour cela ay-ie separé le prologue, & diuisé le tout en pauses, à la façon des actes des Comedies, sans toutesfois m'y assuiettir. Et pource qu'il tient plus de l'vn que de l'autre, i'ay mieux aimé l'appeller Tragedie. Quant à la maniere de proceder, i'ay changé quelques petites circonstances de l'histoire, pour m'approprier au theatre. Au reste i'ay poursuiuy le principal au plus pres du texte que i'ay peu, suyuant les coniectures qui m'ont semblé les plus conuenables à la matiere & aux personnes. Et combien que les affections soyent des plus grandes, toutesfois ie n'ay voulu vser de termes ne de manieres de parler trop eslongnées du commun: encores que ie sache telle auoir esté la façon des Grecs & des Latins, principalement. en leurs Chorus (ainsi qu'ils les nomment). Mais tant s'en faut qu'en cela ie les veuille imiter, que tout au contraire ie ne trouue rien plus mal-seant que ces translations tant forcées, & mots tirés de si loing qu'ils ne peuuent iamais arriuer à poinct : tesmoin Aristophane, qui tant de fois & à bon droit en a repris les Poetes de son temps. Mesmes i'ay fait vn cantique hors de Chorus, & n'ay vsé de strophes, antistrophes, epirremes, parecbases, ny autres tels mots, qui ne seruent que d'espouanter les simples gens : puis que l'vsage de telles choses est aboly, & n'est de soy tant recommendable qu'on se doyue tourmenter à le mettre sus. Quant à l'orthographie, i'ay voulu que l'imprimeur suiuist la commune, quelques maigres fantasies qu'on ait mis en auant depuis trois ou quatre ans ença, & conseilleroye volontiers aux plus opiniastres de ceux qui l'ont changé (s'ils estoyent gens qui demandassent conseil à autres qu'à eux mesmes) puis qu'ils la veulent ranger selon la prononciation, c'est à dire, puis qu'ils veulent faire qu'il y ait quasi autant de manieres d'escrire, qu'il y a non seulement de contrées, mais aussi de personnes en France: ils apprennent à prononcer deuant que vouloir apprendre à escrire : car (pour parler & escrire à leur façon) celuy n'est pas digne de bailler les reigles d'escrire nostre langue, qui ne la peut parler. Ce que ie ne dy pour vouloir calomnier tous ceux qui ont mis en auant leurs difficultés en ceste matiere, laquelle ie confesse auoir bon besoin d'estre reformée: mais pour ceux qui proposent leurs resueries comme certaines reigles que tout le monde doit ensuiure. Au surplus, quant au profit qui se peut tirer de ceste singuliere histoire, outre ce qui en est traité en infinis passages de l'Escriture, i'en laisseray faire à celuy qui parlera en l'Epilogue: vous priant, quiconques vous soyez, receuoir ce mien petit labeur, d'aussi bon cœur qu'il vous est presenté. De Lausanne, ce premier d'Octobre. M. D. L.

ARGVMENT DV
XXII CHAPITRE
de Genese.

ET apres ces choses, Dieu tenta Abraham, & luy dit, Abraham. Et il respondit, Me voicy. Puis luy dit, Pren maintenant ton fils vnique, lequel tu aimes : Ifaac, dy-ie, & t'en va au pays de Moria & l'offre là en holocauste sur vne des montagnes laquelle te diray. Abraham donc se leuant de matin, embasta son asne, & print deux seruiteurs auec luy, & Isaac son fils : & ayant coupé le bois pour l'holocauste, se leua, & s'en alla au lieu que Dieu luy auoit dit. Au troisieme iour Abraham leuant ses yeux, vit le lieu de loing, & dit à ses seruiteurs, Arrestez-vous icy auec l'asne : moy & l'enfant cheminerons iusques là : & quand aurons adoré, nous retournerons à vous. Et Abraham print le bois de l'holocauste, & le mit sur Isaac son fils. Et luy print le feu en sa main & vn glaiue, & s'en allerent eux deux ensemble. Adonc Isaac dit à Abraham son pere, Mon pere. Abraham respondit, Me voicy mon fils. Et il dit, Voicy le feu & le bois, mais où est l'agneau pour l'holocauste ? Et Abraham respondit, Mon fils, Dieu se pouruoira d'agneau pour l'holocauste. Et cheminoyent tous deux ensemble. Et estans venuz au lieu que Dieu luy auoit dit, il edifia illec vn autel, & ordonna le bois : si lia Isaac son fils, & le mit sur l'autel par dessus le bois: & auançant sa main, empoigna le glaiue pour decoler son fils. Lors luy cria du ciel l'Ange du Seigneur, disant, Abraham, Abraham : lequel respondit, Me voicy. Et il luy dit, Tu ne mettras point la main sur l'enfant, & ne luy feras aucune chose. Car maintenant i'ay cognu que tu crains Dieu, veu que tu n'as espargné ton fils, ton vnique, pour l'amour de moy. Et Abraam leua ses yeux, & regarda : & voicy derriere luy vn mouton retenu en vn buisson par ses cornes. Adonc Abraham s'en va & print le mouton, & l'offrit en holocauste en lieu de son fils. Et Abraham appella le nom de ce lieu-la, Le Seigneur verra, dont on dit auiourdhuy de la montagne, Le Seigneur sera veu. Et l'Ange du Seigneur appella Abraham du ciel pour la seconde fois, disant : I'ay iuré par moy-mesme, dit le Seigneur: Pour-

tant que tu as fait ceste chose, & que tu n'as point espar
ton fils, ton vnique, ie te beniray, & multiplieray ta semei
comme les estoilles du ciel & comme le sablon qui est sur
riuage de la mer : & ta semence possedera la porte de
ennemis. Et toutes nations de la terre seront benites en
semence, pource que tu as obey à ma voix.

PERSONNAGES.

PROLOGVE.
ABRAHAM.
SARA.
ISAAC.
LA TROUPE des bergers de la maison d'Abraham
d uisée en deux parties.
L'ANGE.
SATAN.

La chair, le monde, & ses affections
Non seulement au vif representées,
Mais qui plus est, par la foy surmontées.
Et qu'ainsi soit, maint loyal personnage
En donnera bien tost bon tesmoignage :
Bien tost verrez Abraham & Sara,
Et tost apres Isaac sortira.
Ne sont-ils point tesmoins tresueritables ?
Qui veut donc voir choses tant admirables,
Nous le prions seulement d'escouter,
Et ce qu'il a d'aureilles nous prester :
Estant tout seur qu'il entendra merueilles :
Et puis apres luy rendrons ses aureilles.

ABRAHAM parle, sortant de sa maison

Depuis que i'ay mon pays delaissé,
Et de courir çà & là n'ay cessé :
Helas, mon Dieu, est-il encore vn homme
Qui ait porté de trauaux telle somme ?
Depuis le temps que tu m'as retiré
Hors du pays où tu n'es adoré :
Helas, mon Dieu, est-il encore vn homme
Qui ait receu de biens si grande somme ?
Voila comment par les calamitez,
Tu fais cognoistre aux hommes tes bontez :
Et tout ainsi que tu fis tout de rien,
Ainsi fais-tu sortir du mal le bien :
Ne pouuant l'homme à l'heure d'vn grand heu
Assez au clair cognoistre ta grandeur.
Las, i'ay vescu septante & cinq années,
Suyuant le cours de tes predestinées,
Qui ont voulu que prinse ma naissance
D'vne maison riche par suffisance.
Mais quel bien peut l'homme de bien auoir,
S'il est contrainct, contrainct (dy-ie) de voir,
En lieu de toy, qui terre & cieux as faicts,
Craindre & seruir mille dieux contrefaicts ?
Or donc sortir tu me fis de ces lieux,

Abraham

L'homme pour vray ne sauroit faire mieux,
Que de chanter du Seigneur l'excellence :
Car il ne peut, pour toute recompense
Des biens qu'il a par luy iournellement,
Rien luy payer qu'honneur tant seulement.

Cantique d'Abraham & de Sara.

Or sus donc commençons
Et le los annonçons
Du grand Dieu souuerain.
Tout ce qu'eusmes iamais,
Et aurons desormais,
Ne vient que de sa main.
C'est luy qui des hauts cieux
Le grand tour spacieux
Entretient de là haut,
Dont le cours asseuré
Est si bien mesuré,
Que iamais ne defaut.
Il fait l'esté bruslant :
Et fait l'hyuer tremblant :
Terre & mer il conduit,
La pluye & le beau temps :
L'automne & le prin-temps,
Et le iour & la nuict.
Las, Seigneur, qu'estions-nous,
Que nous as entre tous
Choisiz & retenus ?
Et contre les meschans,
Par villes & par champs,
Si long temps maintenus ?
Tiré nous as des lieux
Tous remplis de faux dieux,
Vsant de tes bontez :
Et de mille dangers
Parmy les estrangers
Tousiours nous as iettez.
En nostre grand besoin

Egypte a eu le soin
De nous entretenir :
Puis contrainct a esté
Pharaon despité
De nous laisser venir.
Quatre Rois furieux,
Desia victorieux,
Auons mis à l'enuers.
Du sang de ces meschans
Nous auons veu les champs
Tous rouges & couuers.
De Dieu ce bien nous vient :
Car de nous luy souuient,
Comme de ses amis.
Luy donc nous donnera,
Lors que temps en sera,
Tout ce qu'il a promis.
A nous & nos enfans
En honneur triomphans
Ceste terre appartient :
Dieu nous l'a dit ainsi,
Et le croyons aussi:
Car sa promesse il tient.
Tremblez doncques, peruers,
Qui par tout l'vniuers
Estes si dru semez :
Et qui vous estes faits
Mille dieux contrefaits
Qu'en vain vous reclamez.
Et toy Seigneur vray Dieu,
Sors vn iour de ton lieu,
Que nous soyons vengez
De tous tes ennemis :
Et qu'à neant soyent mis
Les dieux qu'ils ont forgez.

Abraham.

Or sus, Sara, le grand Dieu nous benie :
A celle fin que durant ceste vie,

Pour tant de biens que luy seul nous ottroye,
A le seruir chacun de nous s'employe.
Retirons-nous, & sur tout prenons garde
A nostre fils, que trop ne se hazarde,
Par frequenter tant de malheureux hommes,
Parmy lesquels vous voyez que nous sommes.
Vn vaisseau neuf tient l'odeur longuement
Dont abbreuué il est premierement.
Quoy qu'vn enfant soit de bonne nature,
Il est perdu sans bonne nourriture.

Sara

Monsieur, i'espere en faire mon deuoir :
Et pour autant qe'en luy nous deuons voir
De nostre Dieu le vouloir accomply,
Seure ie suis qu'il prendra si bon ply,
Et le Seigneur si bien le benira,
Qu'à son honneur le tout se conduira.

Satan en habit de moyne.

Ie vay, ie vien, iour & nuict ie trauaille,
Et m'est aduis, en quelque part que i'aille,
Que ie ne pers ma peine aucunement.
Regne le Dieu en son haut firmament :
Mais pour le moins la terre est toute à moy,
Et n'en deplaise à Dieu ny à sa Loy.
Dieu est aux cieux par les siens honnoré :
Des miens ie suis en la terre adoré.
Dieu est au ciel : & bien, ie suis en terre.
Dieu fait la paix : & moy, ie fay la guerre.
Dieu regne en haut : & bien, ie regne en bas.
Dieu fait la paix : & ie fay les debas.
Dieu a crée & la terre & les cieux :
I'ay bien plus fait, car i'ay crée les dieux.
Dieu est seruy de ses Anges luisans :
Ne sont aussi mes anges reluisans ?
Il n'y a pas iusques à mes pourceaux,
A qui ie n'aye enchassé les museaux.
Tous ces paillars, ces gourmans, ces yurongnes
Qu'on voit reluire auec leurs rouges trongnes,

Portans sapphirs, & rubis des plus fins,
Sont mes supposts, sont mes vrais Cherubins.
Dieu ne fit onc chose tant soit parfaite
Qui soit egale à celuy qui l'a faicte :
Mais moy i'ay fait, dont vanter ie me puis,
Beaucoup de gens pires que ie ne suis.
Car quant à moy, ie croy & say tresbien
Qu'il est vn Dieu, & que ie ne vaux rien :
Mais i'en say bien à qui totalement
I'ay renuersé le faux entendement :
Si que les vns (qui est vn cas commun)
Aiment trop mieux seruir mille dieux qu'vn :
Les autres ont fantasie certaine,
Que de ce Dieu l'opinion est vaine.
Voila comment depuis l'homme premier,
Heureusement i'ay suiuy ce mestier :
Et poursuiuray, quoy qu'en doyue aduenir,
Tant que pourray cest habit maintenir.
Habit encore en ce monde incogneu :
Mais qui sera vn iour si bien cognu,
Qu'il n'y aura ne ville ne village
Qui ne le voye à son tresgrand dommage.
O froc, ô froc, tant de maux tu feras,
Et tant d'abus en plein iour couuriras !
Ce froc, ce froc vn iour cognu sera,
Et tant de maux au monde apportera,
Que si n'estoit l'enuie dont i'abonde,
I'aurois pitié moymesme de ce monde.
Car moy qui suis de tous meschans le pire,
En le portant, moymesme ie m'empire.
Or se feront ces choses en leurs temps :
Mais maintenant assaillir ie pretens
Vn Abraham, lequel seul sur la terre
Auec les siens m'ose faire la guerre.
De faict, ie l'ay maintesfois affailly,
Mais i'ay tousiours à mon vouloir failly :
Et ne vis onc vieillard mieux resistant.
Mais il aura des assaux tant & tant,

Qu'en brief sera, au moins comme i'espere,
Du rang de ceux desquels ie suis le pere.
Vray est qu'il a au vray Dieu sa fiance,
Vray est qu'il a du vray Dieu l'alliance,
Vray est que Dieu luy a promis merueilles
Et desia fait des choses nompareilles :
Mais quoy ? s'il n'a ferme perseuerance,
Que luy pourra seruir son esperance ?
Ie feray tant de tours & çà & là,
Que ie rompray l'asseurance qu'il a.
De deux enfans qu'il a, l'vn ie ne crains .
L'autre à grand peine eschappera mes mains.
La mere est femme : & quant aux seruiteurs,
Sont simples gens, sont bien poures pasteurs,
Bien peu rusez encontre mes cautelles.
Or ie m'en vay employer peines telles
A les auoir, que ie suis bien trompé,
Si le plus fin n'est bien tost attrappé.

Abraham resortant de la maison.

Quoy que ie die ou que ie face,
Rien n'y a dont ie ne me lasse,
Tant me soit l'affaire agreable :
Telle est ma nature damnable.
Mais sur tout ie me mescontente
De moymesme,& fort me tormente,
Veu que Dieu iamais ne se fasche
De m'aider : pourquoy ie me tasche
A ne me fascher point aussi
De recognoistre sa mercy,
Autant de bouche que de cœur.

L'Ange.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Seigneur,
Me voicy.

L'Ange.

Ton fils bien-aimé,
Ton fils vnique Isaac nommé,

Par toy soit mené iusqu'au lieu
Surnommé la Myrrhe de Dieu :
Là deuant moy tu l'offriras,
Et tout entier le brusleras,
Au mont que ie te monstreray.

Abraham.

Brusler ! brusler ! ie le feray.
Mais, mon Dieu, si ceste nouuelle
Me semble fascheuse & nouuelle,
Seigneur, me pardonneras-tu ?
Helas, donne-moy la vertu
D'accomplir ce commandement.
Ha bien cognoy'-ie ouuertement,
Qu'enuers moy tu es courroucé
Las, Seigneur, ie t'ay offensé
O Dieu qui as fait ciel & terre,
A qui veux-tu faire la guerre ?
Me veux-tu donc mettre si bas ?
Helas, mon fils, helas, helas !
Par quel bout doy-ie commencer ?
La chose vaut bien ! penser.

Troupe des bergers sortans de la maison d'Abraham.

Demie troupe.

Amis, il est temps, ce me semble,
Que nous retournions tous ensemble
Vers nos compagnons.

Demie troupe.

Ie le veux.
Car si nous sommes auec eux,
Ils en seront plus asseurez.

Isaac.

Hola, ie vous pri', demeurez.
Comment ? me laissez-vous ainsi ?

Troupe.

Isaac, demeurez icy :
Autrement monsieur vostre pere,
Ou bien madame vostre mere

En pourroyent estre mal contens.
Il viendra quelque iour le temps
Que vous serez grand. si Dieu plaist:
Et lors vous cognoistrez que c'est
De garder aux champs les troupeaux,
En danger par monts & par vaux,
De tant de bestes dangereuses,
Sortans des forests ombrageuses.

Isaac.

Pensez-vous aussi que voulusse
Departir deuant pue ie seusse
Si mon pere ainsi le voudroit ?

Troupe.

Aussi faut-il en tout endroict,
Qu'vn fils honneste & bien appris,
Quelque cas qu'il ait entrepris,
A pere & à mere obeisse.

Isaac.

Ie n'y faudray point que ie puisse,
Et fust-ce iusques au mourir.
Mais tandis que ie vay courir
Iusqu'à mon pere, pour cognoistre
Quelle sa volonté peut estre,
Voulez-vous pas m'attendre icy ?

Troupe.

Allez, nous le ferons ainsi.

Cantique de la Troupe.

O l'homme heureux au monde
Qui dessus Dieu se fonde,
Et en fait son rampart :
Laissant tous ces hautains,
Et tant sages mondains
S'esgarer à l'escart.
Poureté ne richesse
N'empesche ny ne blesse
D'vn fidele le cœur.
Quoy qu'il soit tormenté
Et mille fois tenté,

Le fidele est vainqueur.
Ce grand Dieu qui le meine,
Au plus fort de sa peine,
En prend vn si grand soing,
Qu'il le vient redresser
Estant prest de glisser,
En son plus grand besoing.
Cela peut-on cognoistre
D'Abraham nostre maistre :
Car tant plus on l'assaut
Et deçà & delà,
Tant moins de peur il a,
Et moins le cœur luy faut.
Il a laissé sa terre,
Faim luy a fait la guerre :
En Egypte est venu.
Sara il voit soudain
Rauie de la main
D'vn grand Roy incognu.
A Dieu fait sa demande,
Soudain le Roy le mande,
Et sa femme luy rend :
Le prie de vuider.
Abraham sans tarder,
Autre voye entreprend.
Mais durant ceste fuitte,
Son bien si bien profite,
Que pour s'entretenir,
De Loth il se depart :
Pource qu'en mesme part
Deux ne pouuoyent tenir.
Vne guerre soudaine
Entre neuf Rois se meine.
Parmy ces grans combats,
Loth perd auec les siens
Sa franchise & ses biens :
Cinq Rois sont mis à bas.
Nostre maistre fidelle

Oyant ceste nouuelle
Viuement les poursuit,
[340] Les atteint & desfait,
N'ayant d'hommes de faict
Que trois cens dix & huit.
Leur arrache leur proye,
La disme au Prestre paye,
[345] A chacun fait raison.
Puis de tous hautement
Loué tresiustement,
Retourne en sa maison.
Or parmy sa famille
[350] N'auoit-il fils ne fille.
Sara qui cela voit,
Ne pouuant conceuoir,
Luy fait mesmes auoir
Agar qui la seruoit.
[355] D'Agar donc nostre maistre
Ismael se vit naistre.
Treize ans ainsi passa,
Voyant deuant ses yeux
Aller de bien en mieux
[360] Les biens qu'il amassa.
Lors pour signifiance
De la saincte alliance
Du Seigneur & de nous,
Autant petits que grans
[365] Iusqu'aux petits enfans
Circoncis fusmes tous.

Isaac.

Mes amis, Dieu se monstre à nous
Si bon, si gracieux, si doux,
Que iamais ie ne luy demande
[370] Chose tant soit petite ou grande,
Que ie ne me voye accordé
Trop plus que ie n'ay demandé.
I'auois, comme sauez, vouloir

De vous suyure, afin d'aller voir :
Mais voicy mon pere qui vient.

Abraham sortant auec Sara.

Mais tant y a qu'il appartient,
Quand Dieu nous enioint vne chose,
Que nous ayons la bouche close,
Sans estriuer aucunement
Contre son sainct commandement :
S'il commande, il faut obeir.

Sara

Ie vous pri' ne vous esbahir
Si le cas bien fascheux ie trouue.

Abraham.

Au besoin le bon cœur s'esprouue.

Sara.

Il est vray : mais en premier lieu,
Sachez donc le vouloir de Dieu.
Nous auons cest enfant seulet.
Qui est encore tout foiblet :
Auquel gist toute l'asseurance
De nostre si grande esperance.

Abraham.

Mais en Dieu.

Sara.

Mais laissez-moy dire.

Abraham.

Dieu se peut-il iamais desdire ?
Partant asseurée soyez
Que Dieu le garde : & me croyez.

Sara.

Mais Dieu veut-il qu'on le hazarde ?

Abraham.

Hazardé n'est point que Dieu garde.

Sara.

Ie me doutte de quelque cas.

Abraham.

Quant à moy ie n'en doutte pas.

Sara.

C'est quelque entreprise secrette.

Abraham.

Mais telle qu'elle est, Dieu l'a faicte.

Sara.

Au moins si vous sauiez où c'est.

Abraham.

Bien tost le sauray, si Dieu plaist.

Sara.

Il n'ira iamais iusques là.

Abraham.

Dieu pouruoira à tout cela.

Sara.

Mais les chemins sont dangereux.

Abraham.

Qui meurt suyuant Dieu, est heureux.

Sara.

S'il meurt, nous voila demeurez.

Abraham.

Les morts de Dieu sont asseurez.

Sara.

Mieux vaut sacrifier icy.

Abraham.

Mais Dieu ne le veut pas ainsi.

Sara.

Or sus, puis que faire le faut,
Ie prie au grand Seigneur d'enhaut,
Monseigneur, que sa saincte grace
Tousiours compagnie vous face.
Adieu mon fils.

Isaac.

Adieu ma mere.

Sara.

Suyuez bien tousiours vostre pere,
Mon amy, & seruez bien Dieu,
Afin que bien tost en ce lieu
Puissiez en santé reuenir.

Voila, ie ne me puis tenir,
Isaac, que ie ne vous baise.

Isaac.

Ma mere, qu'il ne vous desplaise,
Ie vous veux faire vne requeste.

Sara.

Dites, mon amy, ie suis preste
A l'accorder.

Isaac.

Ie vous supplye
D'oster ceste melancholie.
Mais, s'il vous plaist, ne plourez point,
Ie reuiendray en meilleur poinct :
Ie vous pri' de ne vous fascher.

Abraham.

Enfans, il vous faudra marcher
Pour le moins six bonnes iournées :
Voila vos charges ordonnées,
Et tout ce qui fait de besoin.

Troupe.

Sire, laissez-nous en le soin,
Tant seulement commandez-nous.

Abraham.

Or sus, Dieu soit auecques vous :
Ce grand Dieu qui par sa bonté
Iusques icy nous a esté
Tant propice & tant secourable,
Soit à vous & moy fauorable.
Quoy qu'il y ait, monstrez-vous sage :
I'espere que nostre voyage
Heureusement se parfera.

Sara.

Las, ie ne say quand ce sera
Que reuoir ie vous pourray tous.
Le Seigneur soit auecques vous.

Isaac.

Adieu ma mere.

Abraham.

Adieu.

Troupe.

Adieu.

Abraham.

Or sus, departons de ce lieu.

Satan.

Mais n'est-ce pas pour enrager ?
Moy qui fais vn chacun ranger,
Qui say tirer le monde à moy,
Ne faisant signe que du doy :
Moy qui renuerse & trouble tout,
Ne puis pourtant venir à bout
De ce faux vieillard obstiné.
Quelque assaut qu'on luy ait donné,
Le voila party de ce lieu,
Et tout prest d'obeir à Dieu,
Quoy que le cas soit fort estrange.
Mais au fort, soit que son cœur change,
Ou qu'il sacrifie en effect,
Ce que ie pretens sera faict.
S'il sacrifie, Isaac mourra,
Et mon cœur delit[illegible]é sera
De la frayeur qu'en sa personne
La promesse de Dieu me donne.
S'il change de cœur, ie puis dire
Que i'ay tout ce que ie desire:
Et voila le poinct où ie tasche.
Car si vne fois il se fasche
D'obeir au Dieu tout-puissant,
Le voila desobeissant,
Banny de Dieu & de sa grace.
Voila le poinct que ie pourchasse.
Sus donc, mon froc, courons apres
Pour le combatre de plus pres.

PAVSE.

Abraham.

Enfans, voicy arriué le tiers iour,
Que nous marchons sans auoir fait seiour
Que bien petit : reposer il vous faut :
Car quant à moy, ie veux monter plus haut,
Auec Isaac, iusqu'en vn certain lieu,
Qui m'a esté enseigné de mon Dieu.
Là ie feray sacrifice & priere,
Comme il requiert : demourez donc derriere,
Et vous gardez de marcher plus auant.
Mais vous, mon fils Isaac, passez deuant,
Car le Seigneur requiert vostre presence.

Troupe.

Puis que telle est, Sire, vostre defense,
Nous demourrons.

Abraham.

Baillez-luy ce fardeau,
Et ie prendray le feu & le cousteau.
Bien tost serons de retour, si Dieu plaist.
Mais cependant sauez-vous bien que c'est ?
Priez bien Dieu, & pour nous & pour vous.
Helas i'en ay

Troupe.

Ainfi le ferons-nous.

Abraham.

Autant besoin qu'eut onc poure personne.
Adieu vous dy.

Troupe.

Adieu.

Demie Troupe.

Mais ie m'estonne
Tresgrandement.

Demie Troupe.

Et moy aussi.

Demie Troupe.

Et moy.
Comment ? de voir en tel esmoy

Cil qui si bien a resisté
A tant de maux qu'il a porté !

Demie Troupe.

De dire qu'il craigne la guerre,
Estant en ceste estrange terre,
Il n'y auroit point de raison :
Car nous sauons qu'vne saison
Abimelech, qui est seigneur
Du pays, luy fit cest honneur
De le visiter, & prier
Qu'à luy se daignast allier,
De sorte qu'en solennité
L'accord de paix fut arresté.
Au surplus, quant à son mesnage,
Que peut-il auoir dauantage ?

Demie Troupe.

Il vit en paix & en repos.
Il est vieil, mais il est dispos.

Demie Troupe.

Il n'a qu'vn fils, mais Dieu sait quel :
Au monde il n'en est point de tel.
Son bestail tellement foisonne,
Qu'il semble à voir que Dieu luy donne
Encore plus qu'il ne souhaitte.

Demie Troupe.

Il n'y a chose tant parfaicte,
Qu'il n'y ait tousiours à redire.
Ie prie à Dieu qu'il le retire
Bien tost de la peine où il est.

Demie Troupe.

Ainsi le face, s'il luy plaist.

Demie Troupe.

Quoy qu'il y ait, ie presuppose
Que ce soit quelque grande chose.

Cantique de la Troupe.

Quoy que soit cest vniuers
Tant spacieux & diuers,

Il n'y a rien tant soit ferme,
Rien n'y a qui n'ait son terme.
Dieu tout puissant qui tout garde,
Rien icy bas ne regarde,
Qui tousiours dure de mesme,
S'il ne regarde soy-mesme.
Le grand soleil reluisant,
Va son flambeau conduisant
Autant comme le iour dure :
Puis reuient la nuict obscure,
Couurant de ses noires ailes
Choses & laides & belles.
Que dirons-nous de la lune,
Qui iamais ne fut tout vne ?
Ores apparoist cornue,
Puis demie, puis bossue,
Puis esclaire toute ronde
Les tenebres de ce monde.
Les grans astres flamboyans,
Cà & là vont tournoyans,
Peignans leur diuers visage
Et de beau temps & d'orage.
Si deux iours on met ensemble,
L'vn à l'autre ne ressemble :
L'vn passe legerement,
L'autre dure longuement.
L'vn est sur nous enuieux
De la lumiere des cieux.
L'vn auec sa couleur bleue
Nous veut esblouir la veue :
L'vn veut le monde brusler,
L'autre essaye à le geler.
Ores la terre fleurie
Estend sa tapisserie :
Ores d'vn vent la froidure
Change en blancheur sa verdure.
L'onde en son humide corps
S'enfle par dessus les bords,

Pillant par tout à outrance
Du laboureur l'esperance :
Puis en sa riue premiere
Sera bien tost prisonniere.
Parquoy celuy qui se fonde
En rien qui soit en ce monde,
Soit en haut ou soit en bas,
Ie dy que sage n'est pas.
Qu'est-ce donques de celuy
Qui des hommes fait appuy ?
Parmy tous les animaux
Suiets à dix mille maux,
Le soleil qui fait son tour,
Du monde tout à l'entour,
Ne vit onc, pour dire en somme,
Chose si foible que l'homme.
Car tous les plus vertueux
Par les flots impetueux
Sont tellement combatus,
Qu'on en voit maints abatus.
O combien est fol qui cuide
De fascherie estre vuide
Tant qu'icy bas il sera !
Mais cil qui desirera
D'estre affeuré, il luy faut
Son cœur appuyer plus haut :
Dont il aura bon exemple,
Si nostre maistre il contemple.

Demie Troupe.

Or le mieux que nous puissions faire,
Ie croy que c'est de se retraire
En quelque coin plus à l'escart :
Afin que chacun de sa part,
Prie le Seigneur qu'il luy plaise
Le ramener mieux à son aise.
Allons.

Demie Troupe.

Ie vay tant que ie puis.

PAVSE.

Isaac.

Mon pere.

Abraham.

Helas, las, quel pere ie suis !

Isaac.

Voila du bois, du feu, & vn cousteau,
Mais ie ne voy ne mouton ny agneau,
Que vous puissiez sacrifier icy.

Abraham.

Isaac mon fils, Dieu en aura soucy :
Attendez-moy, mon amy, en ce lieu,
Car il me faut vn petit prier Dieu.

Isaac.

Et bien, mon pere, allez : mais ie vous prie,
Me direz-vous quelle est la fascherie,
Dont ie vous voy tourmenté iusqu'au bout ?

Abraham.

A mon retour, mon fils, vous saurez tout :
Mais cependant prier vous faut aussi.

Isaac.

C'est bien raison : ie le feray ainsi,
Et quant & quant le cas appresteray.
En premier lieu ce bois i'entasseray:
Premierement ce baston sera là,
Puis cestuy-cy, puis apres cestuy-la.
Voila le cas : mon pere aura le soin,
Quant au surplus qui nous fait de besoin.
Prier m'en vay, ô Dieu, ta saincte face :
C'est bien raison, ô Dieu, que ie le face.

Sara.

Plus on vit, plus on voit, helas,
Que c'est que de viure cy bas !
Soit en mari, soit en lignée,
Il n'y eut oncques femme née
Autant heureuse que ie suis.
Mais i'ay tant enduré d'ennuis
Ces trois derniers iours seulement,

Que ie ne say pas bonnement
Lequel est le plus grand des deux :
Ou le bien que i'ay receu d'eux,
Ou le mal que i'ay enduré
En trois iours qu'ils ont demeuré.
Ne nuict ne iour ie ne repose,
Et si ne pense à autre chose
Qu'à mon seigneur & à mon fils.
A vray dire, assez mal ie fis
De les laisser aller ainsi,
Ou de n'y estre allée aussi.
De six iours sont passez les trois :
Que trois, mon Dieu ! & toutesfois
Trois autres attendre il me faut.
Helas, mon Dieu, qui vois d'enhaut
Et le dehors & le dedans,
Vueilles accourcir ces trois ans :
Car à moy ils ne sont point iours,
Fussent-ils trente fois plus cours.
Mon Dieu, tes promesses m'asseurent :
Mais si plus long temps ils demeurent,
I'ay besoin de force nouuelle,
Pour souffrir vne peine telle.
Mon Dieu, permets qu'en toute ioye
Bien tost mon seigneur ie reuoye,
Et mon Isaac que m'as donné,
I'accolle en santé retourné.

Abraham.

O Dieu, ô Dieu, tu vois mon cœur ouuert,
Ce que ie pense, ô Dieu, t'est descouuert :
Qu'est-il besoin que mon mal ie te die ?
Tu vois, helas, tu vois, ma maladie.
Tu peux tout seul gairison m'enuoyer,
S'il te plaisoit seulement m'ottroyer
Vn tout seul poinct que demander ie n'ose.

Satan.

Si faut-il bien chanter quelque autre chose.

Abraham.

Comment ? comment ? se pourroit-il bien faire,
Que Dieu dist l'vn, & puis fist du contraire ?
Est-il trompeur ? si est-ce qu'il a mis
En vray effect ce qu'il m'auoit promis.
Pourroit-il bien maintenant se desdire ?
Si faut-il bein ainsi conclurre & dire,
S'il veut rauoir le fils qu'il m'a donné.
Que dy-ie ? ô Dieu, puis que l'as ordonné,
Il le feray : las, est-il raisonnable
Que moy qui suis pecheur tant miserable,
Vienne à iuger les secrets iugemens
De tes parfaits & tressaincts mandemens ?

Satan.

Mon cas va mal : mon froc, trouuer nous faut
Autre moyen de luy donner assaut.

Abraham.

Mais il peut estre aussi que i'imagine
Ce qui n'est point : car tant plus i'examine
Ce cas icy, plus ie le trouue estrange.
C'est quelque songe, ou bien quelque faux ange
Qui m'a planté cecy en la ceruelle :
Dieu ne veut point d'offrande si cruelle.
Maudit-il pas Cain n'ayant occis
Qu'Abel son frere ? & i'occiray mon fils !

Satan.

Iamais, iamais.

Abraham.

Ha, qu'ay-ie cuidé dire ?
Pardonne moy, mon Dieu, & me retire
Du mauuais pas où mon peché me meine.
Deliure moy, Seigneur, de ceste peine.
Tuer le veux moy-mesme de ma main.
Puis qu'il te plaist, ô Dieu, il est certain
Que c'est raison : parquoy ie le feray.

Satan.

Mais si ie puis, ie t'en engarderay.

Abraham.

Mais le faisant, ie feroy' Dieu menteur :
Car il m'a dit qu'il me feroit cest heur
Que de mon fils Isaac il sortiroit
Vn peuple grand qui la terre empliroit.
Isaac tué, l'alliance est desfaicte.
Las est-ce en vain, Seigneur, que tu l'as faicte ?
Las est-ce en vain, Seigneur, que tant de fois
Tu m'as promis qu'en Isaac me ferois
Ce que iamais à autre ne promis ?
Las pourroit-il à neant estre mis
Ce dont tu m'as tant de fois asseuré ?
Las est-ce en vain qu'en toy i'ay esperé ?
O vaine attente, ô vain espoir de l'homme,
C'est tout cela que ie puis dire en somme,
I'ay prié Dieu qu'il me donnast lignée,
Pensant, helas, s'elle m'estoit donnée,
Que i'en aurois vn merueilleux plaisir :
Et ie n'en ay que mal & desplaisir.
De deux enfans, l'vn i'ay chassé moy mesme:
De l'autre il faut, ô douleur tresextreme !
Que ie sois dit le pere & le bourreau !
Bourreau, helas ! helas, ouy, bourreau !
Mais n'es-tu pas celuy Dieu proprement,
Qui m'escoutas ainsi patiemment,
Voire, Seigneur, au plus fort de ton ire,
Quand tu partis pour Sodome destruire ?
Maintenant donc veux-tu, mon Dieu, mon Roy,
Me repousser quand ie prie pour moy ?
Engendré l'ay, & faut que le defface.
O Dieu, ô Dieu, au moins fay-moy la grace

Satan.

Grace ! ce mot n'est point en mon papier.

Abraham.

Qu'vn autre soit de mon fils le meurtrier.
Helas, Seigneur, faut-il que ceste main
Vienne à donner ce coup tant inhumain ?
Las que feray-ie à la mere dolente,

Si elle entend ceste mort violente ?
Si ie t'allegue, helas, qui me croira ?
S'on ne le croit, las, quel bruit en courra ?
Seray-ie pas d'vn chacun reietté
Comme vn patron d'extreme cruauté ?
Et toy, Seigneur, qui te voudra prier ?
Qui se voudra iamais en toy fier ?
Las pourra bien ceste blanche vieillesse
Porter le fais d'vne telle tristesse ?
Ay-ie passé parmy tant de dangers,
Tant trauersé de pays estrangers,
Souffert la faim, la soif, le chaud, le froid.
Et deuant toy tousiours cheminé droict :
Ay-ie vescu, vescu si longuement,
Pour me mourir fi malheureusement ?
Fendez mon cœur, fendez, fendez, fendez,
Et pour mourir plus long temps n'attendez :
Plustost on meurt, tant moins la mort est greue.

Satan.

Le voila bas, si Dieu ne le releue.

Abraham.

Que dy-ie ? où suis-ie ? ô Dieu mon createur,
Ne suis-ie pas ton loyal seruiteur ?
Ne m'as-tu pas de mon pays tiré ?
Ne m'as-tu pas tant de fois asseuré,
Que ceste terre aux miens estoit donnée ?
Ne m'as-tu pas donné ceste lignée,
En m'asseurant que d'Isaac sortiroit
Vn peuple tien qui la terre empliroit ?
Si donc tu veux mon Isaac emprunter,
Que me faut-il contre toy disputer ?
Il est à toy : mais de toy ie l'ay pris.
Et pourautant quand tu l'auras repris,
Resusciter plustost tu le feras,
Que ne m'aduinst ce que promis tu m'as.
Mais, ô Seigneur, tu sais qu'homme ie suis,
Executer rien de bon ie ne puis,
Non pas penser : mais ta force inuincible

Fait qu'au croyant il n'est rien impossible.
Arriere chair, arriere affections,
Retirez-vous, humaines passions,
Rien ne m'est bon, rien ne m'est raisonnable,
[770] Que ce qui est au Seigneur agreable.

Satan.

Et bien, & bien, Isaac donc mourra,
Et nous verrons apres que ce sera.
O faux vieillard, tant me donnes de peine !

Abraham.

Voila mon fils Isaac qui se pourmeine.
[775] O poure enfant, ô nous poures humains,
Cachans fouuent la mort dedans nos seins,
Alors que plus en pensons estre loing !
Et pourautant il est tresgrand besoing
De viure ainsi que mourir on desire.
[780] Or ça mon fils : helas que veux-ie dire !

Isaac.

Plaist-il mon pere ?

Abraham.

Helas ce mot me tue.
Mais si faut-il pourtant que m'esuertue.
Isaac mon fils : helas, le cœur me tremble.

Isaac.

Vous auez peur, mon pere, ce me semble.

Abraham.

[785] Ha mon amy, ie tremble voirement.
Helas, mon Dieu !

Isaac.

Dites-moy hardiment
Que vous auez, mon pere, s'il vous plaist.

Abraham.

Ha mon amy, si vous sauiez que c'est.
Misericorde, ô Dieu, misericorde !
[790] Mon fils, mon fils, voyez-vous ceste corde,
Ce bois, ce feu, & ce cousteau icy ?
Isaac, Isaac, c'est pour vous tout cecy.

Satan.

Ennemy suis de Dieu & de nature,
Mais pour certain ceste chose est si dure,
Qu'en regardant ceste vnique amitié,
Bien peu s'en faut que n'en aye pitié.

Abraham.

Helas Isaac !

Isaac.

Helas pere tresdoux,
Ie vous supply, mon pere, à deux genoux
Auoir au moins pitié de ma ieunesse.

Abraham.

O seul appuy de ma foible vieillesse !
Las mon amy, mon amy ie voudrois
Mourir pour vous cent millions de fois :
Mais le Seigneur ne le veut pas ainsi.

Isaac.

Mon pere, helas, ie vous crie mercy.
Helas, helas, ie n'ay ne bras ne langue
Pour me defendre, ou faire ma harangue !
Mais, mais voyez, ô mon pere, mes larmes,
Auoir ne puis ny ne veux autres armes
Encontre vous : ie suis Isaac, mon pere :
Ie suis Isaac, le seul fils de ma mere :
Ie suis Isaac, qui tien de vous la vie :
Souffrirez-vous qu'elle me soit rauie ?
Et toutesfois si vous faites cela
Pour obeir au Seigneur, me voila,
Me voila prest, mon pere, & à genoux,
Pour souffrir tout, & de Dieu & de vous.
Mais qu'ay-ie fait, qu'ay-ie fait pour mourir ?
He Dieu, he Dieu, veuille me secourir.

Abraham.

Helas mon fils Isaac, Dieu te commande
Qu'en cest endroit tu luy serues d'offrande,
Laissant à moy, à moy ton poure pere,
Las quel ennuy !

Isaac.

Helas ma poure mere,
Combien de morts ma mort vous donnera !
Mais dites-moy aumoins qui m'occira ?

Abraham.

Qui t'occira, mon fils ? mon Dieu, mon Dieu,
Ottrope-moy de mourir en ce lieu !

Isaac.

Mon pere.

Abraham.

Helas, ce mot ne m'appartient.
Helas Isaac, si est-ce qu'il conuient
Seruir à Dieu.

Isaac.

Mon pere, me voila.

Satan.

Mais ie vous pri', qui eust pensé cela ?

Isaac.

Or donc mon pere, il faut, comme ie voy,
Il faut mourir. Las mon Dieu, aide-moy !
Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, renforce-moy le cœur !
Rend-moy, mon Dieu, sur moymesme vainqueur
Liez, frappez, bruslez, ie suis tout prest
D'endurer tout, mon Dieu, puis qu'il te plaist.

Abraham.

A, a, a, a, & qu'est-ce, & qu'est ceci ?
Misericorde, ô Dieu, par ta mercy.

Isaac.

Seigneur, tu m'as & creé & forgé.
Tu m'as, Seigneur, sur la terre logé,
Tu m'as donné ta saincte cognoissance,
Mais ie ne t'ay porté obeissance
Telle, Seigneur, que porter ie deuois :
Ce que te prie, helas, à haute voix,
Me pardonner. Et à vous, mon seigneur,
Si ie n'ay fait tousiours autant d'honneur
Que meritoit vostre douceur tant grande,
Treshumblement pardon vous en demande.

Quant à ma mere, helas, elle est absente.
Veuille, mon Dieu, par ta faueur presente
La preseruer & garder tellement,
Qu'elle ne soit troublée aucunement.

Icy est bandé Isaac.

Las ie m'en vay en vne nuict profonde,
Adieu vous dy la clarté de ce monde.
Mais ie suis seur que de Dieu la promesse
Me donnera trop mieux que ie ne laisse.
Ie suis tout prest, mon pere, me voila.

Satan.

Iamais, iamais enfant mieux ne parla.
Ie suis confus, & faut que ie m'enfuye.

Abraham.

Las mon amy, auant la departie,
Et que ma main ce coup inhumain face,
Permis me soit de te baiser en face.
Isaac mon fils, le bras qui t'occira
Encore vn coup au moins t'accolera.

Isaac.

Las, grand mercy.

Abraham.

O ciel, qui es l'ouurage
De ce grand Dieu, & qui m'es tesmoignage
Tressuffisant de la grande lignée
Que le vray Dieu par Isaac m'a donnée :
Et toy la terre à moy cinq fois promise,
Soyez tesmoins que ma main n'est point mise
Sus cest enfant par haine ou par vengeance,
Mais pour porter entiere obeissance
A ce grand Dieu, facteur de l'vniuers,
Sauueur des bons & Iuge des peruers.
Soyez tesmonis qu'Abraham le fidele,
Par la bonté de Dieu, a la foy telle,
Que nonobstant toute raison humaine,
Iamais de Dieu la parolle n'est vaine.
Or est-il temps, ma main, que t'esuertues,

Et qu'en frappant mon seul fils, tu me tues.
Icy le cousteau luy tombe des mains.

Isaac.

Qu'est-ce que i'oy, mon pere ? helas mon pere !

Abraham.

A, a, a, a.

Isaac.

Las ie vous obtempere.
Suis-ie pas bien ?

Abraham.

Fut-il iamais pitié,
Fut-il iamais vne telle amitié ?
Fut-il iamais pitié ? a, a, ie meurs,
Ie meurs, mon fils.

Isaac.

Ostez toutes ces peurs,
Ie vous supply', m'empescherez-vous doncques
D'aller à Dieu ?

Abraham.

Helas, las qui vit onques
En petit corps vn esprit autant fort ?
Helas, mon fils, pardonne-moy ta mort.
Icy le cuide frapper.

L'Ange.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Mon Dieu.

L'Ange.

Remets ton cousteau en son lieu :
Garde bien de ta main estendre
Dessus l'enfant, ne d'entreprendre
De l'outrager aucunement.
Or peux-ie voir tout clairement
Quel amour tu as au Seigneur,
Puis que luy portes cest honneur
De vouloir, pour le contenter,
Ton fils à la mort presenter.

Abraham.

O Dieu !

Isaac.

O Dieu !

Abraham.

Seigneur, voila que c'est
De t'obeir. Voicy mon cas tout prest :
Prendre le veux.

Icy prend le mouton.

L'Ange.

Abraham.

Abraham.

Me voicy,
Seigneur, Seigneur.

L'Ange.

Le Seigneur dit ainsi :
Ie te promets par ma grand' maiesté,
Par la vertu de ma diuinité,
Puis que tu as voulu faire cela,
Puis que tu m'as obey iusques là,
De n'espargner de ton seul fils la vie :
Maugré Satan & toute son enuie,
Benir te veux auec toute ta race.
Vois-tu du ciel la reluisante face ?
Vois-tu les grains de l'arene au riuage ?
Croistre feray tellement ton lignage,
Qu'il n'y a point tant d'estoiles aux cieux,
Tant de sablon par les bords spacieux
De l'Ocean qui la terre enuironne,
Qu'il descendra d'enfans de ta personne.
Ils domteront quiconques les haira,
Et par celuy qui de toy sortira,
Sur toutes gens & toutes nations
Ie desploiray mes benedictions
Et grans thresors de diuine puissance,
Puis que tu m'as porté obeissance.

EPILOGVE.

OR voyez-vous de foy la grand' puissance,
Et le loyer de vraye obeissance.
Parquoy, messieurs, & mes dames aussi,
Ie vous supply', quand sortirez d'icy,
Que de vos cœurs ne sorte la memoire
De ceste digne & veritable histoire.
Ce ne sont point des farces mensongeres,
Ce ne sont point quelques fables legeres:
Mais c'est vn faict, vn faict tresueritable,
D'vn serf de Dieu, de Dieu tresredoutable.
Parquoy seigneurs, dames, maistres, maistresses,
Poures, puissans, ioyeux, pleins de destresses,
Grans & petits, en ce tant bel exemple
Chacun de vous se mire & se contemple.
Tels sont pour vray les miroirs où l'on voit
Le beau, le laid, le boussu, & le droit.
Car qui de Dieu tasche accomplir sans feinte,
Comme Abraham, la parole tressaincte,
Qui nonobstant toutes raisons contraires,
Remet en Dieu & soy & ses affaires,
Il en aura pour certain vne issue
Meilleure encor' qu'il ne l'aura conceue.
Vienent les vents, vienent tempestes fortes,
Vienent tormens, & morts de toutes sortes,
Tournent les cieux, toute la terre tremble,
Tout l'vniuers renuerse tout ensemble,
Le cœur fidele est fondé tellement,
Que renuerser ne peut aucunement :
Mais au rebours, tout homme qui s'arreste
Au iugement & conseil de sa teste :
L'homme qui croit tout ce qu'il imagine,
Il est certain que tant plus il chemine,
Du vray chemin tant plus est escarté,
Vn petit vent l'a soudain emporté :
Et qui plus est, sa nature peruerse
En peu de temps soymesme se renuerse.
Or toy grand Dieu, qui nous as fait cognoistre

Les grans abus esquels nous voyons estre
Le poure monde, helas, tant peruerty,
[40] Fay qu'vn chacun de nous soit aduerty
En son endroit, de tourner en vsage
La viue foy de ce sainct personnage.
Voila, messieurs, l'heureuse recompense
Que Dieu vous doint pour vostre bon silence.

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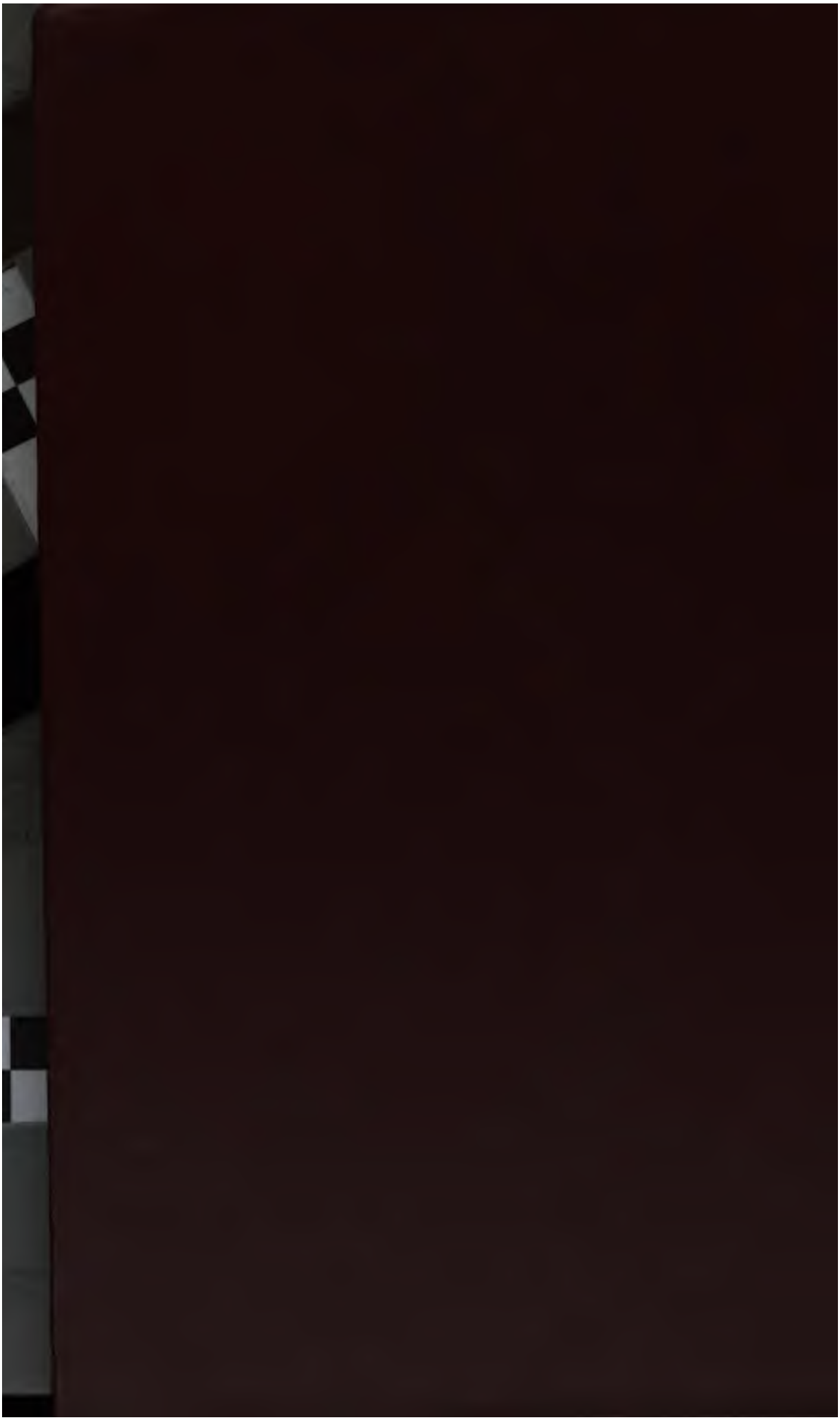
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